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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

From a painting in the Museum of the Ministry of Marine at Madrid, considered in Spain to be the only authentic portrait of the Admiral.

**HISTORY OF THE
DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST
OF COSTA RICA**

BY

RICARDO FERNÁNDEZ GUARDIA

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ROYAL ACADEMIES OF LANGUAGE AND OF HISTORY**

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"THROUGH SOUTH AMERICA"**

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INTRODUCTION

THE story of the beginning of things Spanish in Central America, as related here by Señor Fernández Guardia, particularly that part of it assigned to his own enlightened Republic of Costa Rica, for the first time gives to English-speaking readers intimate pen portraits of many of the doughty *Conquistadores* and tales of romantic historical interest, drawn from the correspondence and public documents of the period. The more effectively to visualize the personalities of the actors in the great drama and the obstacles they overcame, he has wisely reproduced in some of his chapters the style of narration found in the originals of these communications—a style that the translator has rendered into English as nearly as he could with a proper regard for the mental comfort of the reader.

The principal source from which the author has taken his material is that treasure-house of the American historian—the Archives of the Indies at Seville. Here are stored thousands of forgotten documents: royal decrees and orders, contracts, or *capitulaciones*, entered into with the Crown by the intrepid adventurers for the pro-

tection of their rights in the conquests undertaken, quaintly phrased complaints setting forth conflicts of interest, lengthy reports, or relations, by pious and militant priests and friars, and a mass of involved legal papers showing a high degree of technicality, but rigid regard for the right, that would make interesting and instructive reading for the present-day lawyer.

Into this maze of documentation Señor Fernández Guardia has frequently ventured on the occasions of his visits to Spain, and with notable success. He has made himself familiar with the contents of many a long-hidden bundle, and has brought to light in the present volume an array of facts and an ensemble of personalities which merited a much earlier presentation to the world. From the same source his father before him, Don León Fernández, the grand old man of Costa Rican letters, and the brilliant diplomatist, Don Manuel M. de Peralta, have culled the great collections of documents published under their names, and, parenthetically, it is gratifying to learn that the King, Don Alfonso XIII., whose liberal and progressive tendencies are well known, shows a lively interest in bringing to a conclusion the task, undertaken some years ago, of unearthing and systematizing these early records—a task in which Spain is collaborating with the Spanish-American republics.

The wealth of hidden riches in Seville's hall of archives is still great and worthy of the labors of students for many years to come; they may rest assured that their time will not be spent in vain. In proof of this, I need only point to the work on Costa Rica that is here presented. Costa Rica is one of the smallest of the American countries. As late as thirty years ago the names even of the first *Conquistadores* were still unknown, and the events of the country's past were shrouded in darkness. Its very name seems scarcely to have been known by the earlier historians.

Indeed, apart from its most salient features, this is true of the history of Spanish discoveries and conquest in America throughout. Its most notable incidents are misunderstood; in most cases they have been judged with prejudice and greatly distorted. Particularly is this true in English-speaking countries, where the fierce rivalry that for centuries existed between Spain and England, in politics, religion and commerce, has left a deep impression. We North Americans get our conceptions of the conquering Spaniard from such works as Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* and the tales of other English romancers, which glorify such arch-pirates as Drake, Raleigh and Hawkins, and picture the work of the *Conquistadores* as wholly one of blood, ra-

pine and destruction, inspired by no purpose but the lust for gold. This is far from the truth.

It may be that in many instances the Spaniards were guilty of cruelty and spoliation: Pizarro used no light hand in his subjugation of the Inca empire, and a more ruthless miscreant than Pedro Arias de Avila (that Pedrarias who murdered Núñez de Balboa) never sullied a page of history. But this was always in disobedience of the express orders of the Crown, which was unswerving in its devotion to the principles impressed upon it by the humanitarian and benevolent Queen Isabella the Catholic. And who would venture to assert that the methods of any other European nation, tempting fate by undertaking such a conquest, would have been different? Were the Germans in Venezuela more humane when that territory was mortgaged to the Augsburg money-lender by the Emperor Charles V; cannot we point out a just contrast in the atrocities of the English, French and Dutch corsairs, committed as they were against the Spanish settlers—Christians like themselves—and supported as they were by their respective governments? Surely such deeds are not calculated to give us a very exalted idea of the humanitarianism of these others. And what of our treatment of our own Indians? We may not have enslaved or tortured them, but we have

debauched and almost annihilated them and have driven them from their lands.

Unfortunately in this respect all men are more or less alike; the vaunted superiority of any one group is usually but the offspring of national vanity and the pride of race—if not, indeed, born of crass hypocrisy. Between the *Conquistador* of olden times, who despoiled the Indian of his gold, and the present-day speculator, who ruins his fellow-trader by a clever coup on the stock exchange, there is no great difference on the score of morality. If there is any, the advantage would seem to lie with the former, for his evil exploits at least were attended by the risk of death from a poisoned arrow or the thrust of a savage spear.

But the Spaniards who overran the new world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not all of them the ruthless vampires that we are so lazily prone to accept them as having been; their sole aim and impulse was not the spoliation of the native. Far from it. Indeed, no greater injustice could be done to the great body of the *Conquistadores* than to charge them with the misdeeds of the comparatively few who were treacherous and cruel. Mistaken in their methods they may have been—unduly zealous in their efforts to coerce the conquered savages; but they were chivalrous and brave, almost incredibly

brave from our modern viewpoint, and their methods were the methods of the times. They had been practiced in Europe since Christianity first gained the power and more than ever at the dawn of the Reformation.

Spain at the beginning of the sixteenth century was the master of Europe; her statesmen were the most enlightened and her captains the most experienced and successful; her capital, Madrid, was the seat of Europe's culture. With the final expulsion of the heretic Moor from the Peninsula and the conclusion of a long period of war, her fighting men, trained in the school of arms and fanatical in their championing of the Christian faith, their blood still running hot with the lust for adventure and with religious zeal, looked with keen liking upon the western world then recently discovered, and fairly rushed the Crown with their eagerness to undertake its conquest and bring it into the fold of the church. Gold was also a lure, but a minor one. The translator has read hundreds of decrees and instructions issued by the kings of Spain in those early days, and can testify that every expedition set forth under the strictest injunctions—"on pain of Our Royal displeasure"—against spoliation and inhumane treatment of the Indian. The moving impulse of the King, as shown by these documents, was always the conversion of

the Indian and his instruction in the Christian faith.

Señor Fernández Guardia shows us in his book how faithfully most of the Spanish captains obeyed these instructions. In these pages the reader cannot but be edified by the examples of just treatment, fortitude and heroic endurance of almost unbelievable hardships shown by many of these leaders: here we have the story of the intrepid Gil González Dávila and of the friar *Conquistador*, Juan de Estrada Rávago, who was so adored by the Indians and who stripped himself even to the shirt on his back to assuage the sufferings of the needy; of the illustrious *Caballero* of Salamanca, Juan Vázquez de Coronado—generous always and humane in all his acts; of Don Rodrigo Arias Maldonado, who penetrated into the very heart of the terrible Salamanca country without firing an arquebus or drawing a sword, and who afterwards ended his romantic life within the cloisters of the Bethlehemite Order. Nor can we withhold our admiration from the noble but unfortunate Diego de Nicuesa, or the valiant Captain Alonso Calero or Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz. All of these were men of a superior mold, of whom any nation might be justly proud.

Succumbing to temptation, many of the *Conquistadores* were diverted from their loftier pur-

poses and were overcome by greed for the country's natural riches with which to exploit themselves at home; but most remained to build up a civilization that would endure and add luster to the crown they served. The painstaking administration and the wise counsel shown in their correspondence with their Kings and the Council of the Indies is reflected in the great code of laws, published in 1680 by Charles II. and known as the Compilation of the Laws of the Indies, in which Spain's vast colonial empire was systematized and provided with laws which demonstrate the highest degree of enlightenment to be found in Christendom at that period. First and foremost in every decree prescribing those laws is the declaration of faith that won for the Spanish rulers the title of The Catholic Kings. Uppermost throughout appears the purpose to Christianize the new world; wholly without sarcasm can it be said that purely secondary was the Crown's concern over the "Royal Fifth" of the wealth unearthed in its new dominions. Indeed, that fifth frequently found its way into the coffers of the English Crown, through the piracy of its own captains, and history records no instance of its repudiation as "tainted wealth."

It has been said by one of the ablest of recent historians that the slower, more thorough colonizing methods of the Anglo-Saxon would never

have won dominion over the American continents. Yet in those two centuries Spain settled and Christianized a world larger than Europe and built up a political structure far more admirably effective and enlightened, considering her interests as a great power, than the early government maintained in India by the English; she created an empire captaled by the greatest cities in the world of their day: Mexico, Guatemala and Lima were each in their turn richer, more cultured and greater commercially than any cities of their time in Europe.

TRANSLATOR.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 1, 1913.

History of the Discovery and Conquest of Costa Rica

CHAPTER I

PRE-COLUMBIAN COSTA RICA

THE territory of Costa Rica, which lies between the 8th and 11th parallels of north latitude, constitutes a small section of Central America, a vast geographical entity, peculiarly distinguished for its geological character, having its beginning in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and ending in the Isthmus of Panama. Its area is estimated at fifty thousand square kilometers, bounded on the north by Nicaragua, on the south by Panama, on the northeast by the Caribbean Sea, and on the southeast by the Pacific Ocean. On the Pacific coast are the Gulfs of Dulce and Nicoya, the latter of which enjoys the reputation of being one of the most beautiful spots in the world.¹

The country is so mountainous that in only two regions are level plains of any considerable ex-

¹ Elisée Reclus, *Nouvelle géographie universelle*, Vol. XVII, p. 546.

tent to be found. The imposing mass of the principal range, the Great Cordillera, which runs from northeast to southeast, dominates all the rest. This cordillera boasts nine volcanoes, of which four are more or less active, and several peaks that reach to a considerable height—above 3800 meters. From the summits of several the two oceans may be viewed.

The soil, watered by innumerable rivers and streams flowing in opposite directions, some toward the Atlantic and some toward the Pacific, is extraordinarily fertile. A few of these rivers are navigable, but only in their lower courses.

The climate is essentially maritime, though not uniform throughout the country. The Atlantic coast region is humid and rainy during the entire year. In the region of the Pacific two very different seasons prevail, the dry and the rainy. The dry corresponds more or less with the autumn and winter of the boreal zone, the rainy with its spring and summer. The lowlands, particularly along the coasts, are hot. In the highlands, however, the temperature is always cool, even cold in the highest altitudes. Considered in its entirety, the climate of Costa Rica is one of the most benign in the tropical zone.

Notwithstanding the fact that because of her geographical position Costa Rica belongs to North America, her ethnography, fauna and



ANCIENT GOLDEN ORNAMENT OF COSTA RICAN INDIANS.

National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

flora are South American in character. The fauna and flora are equally exuberant.²

When Costa Rica was discovered by the Spanish in the beginning of the sixteenth century, her territory was inhabited by several thousand semi-barbarous Indians, distributed among the great forests by which it was covered. These Indians belonged to five distinct races called Corobicí, Boruca (or Brunca), Chorotega, Nahua and Carib. There is reason to believe that the Corobicís were the most ancient; the Borucas probably migrated from the interior of Colombia about the year one thousand of the Christian era; the Chorotegas from Chiapas towards the fourteenth century; the Nahuas from Mexico fifty years later, and the Caribs from Venezuela in about the year 1400.

Concerning the Corobicís, whom Peralta³ calls the "mysterious nation," we know but little. Bishop Thiel⁴ classifies them with the Nahuas, but in our judgment he is in error. Oviedo says:⁵ "And the Indians" (the Corobicís) "are of a language distinct from all those men-

² For a study of the geography of Costa Rica, consult the excellent works of Professor H. Pittler.

³ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Etnología Centro-Americana*, p. 11, Madrid, 1893.

⁴ Bernardo Augusto Thiel—*Revista de Costa Rica en el siglo XIX*, pp. 11 and 13.

⁵ Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo—*Historia de las Indias*, Book XLII, chap. XII.

tioned in this history.” On this point Gomara⁶ agrees with Oviedo. He enumerates the languages of Nicaragua as: “* * * Corobicí, which they praise greatly; Chorotega, which is the native and ancient language; Chondal, a rude language from the highlands; Orotina. * * *” In his turn Herrera⁷ writes: “In Nicaragua five different languages are spoken. Corobicí, which is much spoken in Choluteca, and which is the native and ancient tongue. * * *”

The Corobicís were divided into two branches, the Corobicís proper and the Votos. Both inhabited the north of the country—the Corobicís between the rivers Tenorio and Corobicí; the Votos between the rivers Barva and Orosí, also on the southern borders of the San Juan River and on both banks of the San Carlos River. The Votos were vassals of the King of the Gue-tares of the West, and, at the period of the conquest, were governed by a *cacica* (chieftainess or queen), whose husband was a prince consort after the modern idea; he took no part in the government.

Since no more profound study has been made concerning the Indians of Costa Rica, any pos-

⁶ Francisco López de Gomara—*Historia de las Indias*, chap. CCVI.

⁷ Antonio de Herrera—*Década III*, Book 4, chap. VII.

itive statement in regard to the Corobicís would be difficult, but it is probable that those individuals of the race who existed in the sixteenth century were the remnants of a people established in the country prior to the invasions of the Bruncas, Chorotegas, Nahuas and Caribs. The beauty of their language, which, according to Gomara, was praised among other Indians, is an evidence of its antiquity.

The habitat of the Boruca (or Brunca) race, to which belonged the Quepos and the Cotos, was on the Pacific slopes, ranging from the borders of the Pirrís River along the plains of Térraba and Boruca as far as Chiriquí. These were very warlike, particularly the Cotos, who lived in well-fortified villages and were distinguished by their fine presence, their beauty and frank, generous nature—rare qualities among the Indians. They possessed gold in great quantities, which they obtained from the rivers and by spoliation of the Caribbean tribes against whom they waged relentless war. Many beautiful examples of the bracelets, necklaces and other golden ornaments with which they liked to adorn themselves have been taken from their rich sepulchers; of late years among these sepulchers considerable exploration has been carried on.⁸

⁸ From a single one of these sepulchers, located in the valley of the General, they extracted golden ornaments of the value of \$25,000.

Devoted to agriculture, they raised abundant crops of maize, cacao, fruit and cotton. On the women fell the burden of labor in the fields; they also accompanied their husbands in war, and became famous as Amazons. The old men spun and wove cotton garments. The Cotos were dexterous in all the arts of war; fighting was their favorite occupation. They sacrificed their prisoners without pity, except the women and children, who were reduced to slavery. These, however, were also sacrificed on the death of their masters. Unlike other Indians, they were not addicted to drunkenness.

The Chorotegas, or Mangues, occupied the Peninsula of Nicoya and the islands and shores of the gulf of that name as far as Herradura Point. They were divided into feudal seigniories under the sovereignty of the great *cacique* of Nicoya. His principal clans were centered at Zapandí,⁹ Diríá,¹⁰ Namiapí,¹¹ Orosí,¹² Papagayo,¹³ Cangén,¹⁴ Paro,¹⁵ Chomes,¹⁶ Orotina,¹⁷ Churuteca¹⁸ and Nicoya,¹⁹ the last named

⁹ Tempisque.

¹⁰ Bolsón.

¹¹ Culebra Bay.

¹² Santa Rosa.

¹³ The Bay of Salinas.

¹⁴ Cangel.

¹⁵ Lepanto.

¹⁶ Guasimal.

¹⁷ Abangares.

¹⁸ The coast from Caldera to La Herradura.

¹⁹ Pueblo Viejo.



GOLDEN ORNAMENT WORN BY BRUNCA INDIANS.

National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo Gómez.)

being the capital. These Indians also occupied extensive territories in Nicaragua, Honduras and Salvador.

Concerning them, thanks to the historian Fernández de Oviedo, who visited the Gulf of Nicoya in 1529, we are possessed of many important facts. Of all the Indians established in Costa Rica, they were the most numerous and farthest advanced. They lived in substantial communities, boasting temples and markets. In the village of Nicoya alone Gil González Dávila, in 1522, baptized more than six thousand. They even possessed a currency, consisting of cacao beans, and became skilled in the art of falsifying it with much cunning—by extracting the kernel and refilling the shell with earth.

Of good stature they were, too—powerful, well-appearing and of a fairly light complexion. “The women of Nicoya are the most beautiful I have seen in those parts,” writes Oviedo. Both men and women were addicted to tattooing; each lord thus marked his subjects with his own particular sign. The device of the Nicoyanos was the tiger. They also pierced the ears and lower lip for the purpose of adornment by inserting bones or buttons of gold. The men dressed like the Mexicans with skirts and sleeveless cotton shirts of different colors. They

shaved the front half of the head, leaving at the back a queue extending from ear to ear; but the warriors who had triumphed over an enemy in single combat enjoyed the privilege of shaving the entire head, with the exception of a small crown or tuft of hair in the form of a cone which terminated in a sort of tassel. The sole garment worn by the women was a small apron, three palms long, hanging from the waist. They combed and braided their hair and parted it in the middle, the two braids falling over the ears. On festal occasions the men adorned themselves with beautiful plumage, golden livery, and necklaces of shells and pebbles of various kinds most artistically carved. Their arms consisted of bows and arrows, lances, hatchets and stone maces; these last were cut with artistic designs. They wrote by means of hieroglyphics in books of parchment made of deer skin, using red and black ink; in these they also painted plats and maps of their estates.

Their principal crops were maize, cotton, beans, *zapotes*,¹⁹ and *nísperos*,²⁰ and other fruits. In the cultivation and gathering of *zapotes* and *nísperos* the Chorotegas possessed a monopoly, as the Nahuas had with cacao, so it was these products that constituted the basis of commerce

¹⁹ *Sapota zapotilla*.

²⁰ *Lucuma mammosa*.

between them. The Chorotegas also cultivated tobacco, which they smoked on certain occasions. They wove very pretty cotton cloths and dyed them with various colors, for this purpose using the dye from the Brazil wood and purple obtained from a shellfish.²¹ Also they were skillful potters, particularly those from the Islands of Chira. Oviedo relates that he took to the Island of Española several samples of crockery "which for its beauty was a gift fit for a prince." They fished for pearls among the islands in the Gulf of Nicoya and gathered great shells which they used as spades in tilling the soil and with which they made paddles for their canoes.

In general these Indians were monogamists, but the nobles might have several wives. Those who had occupied the Prince's bed were afterwards much sought after, for they were considered to have been greatly honored. The laws governing these Indians were so wise that even as late as the eighteenth century their influence was still felt. A companion of the famous corsair, Dampier,²² tells us that among them no penalty against regicide or parricide even existed, for it was believed that no one was capable of committing such crimes. The thief was con-

²¹ *Purpura patula*.

²² William Funnell—*Voyage to the South Sea*, pp. 131 and 132.

demned to service as the slave of his victim until indemnification for the injury suffered had been paid.

From the time when Gil González Dávila appeared amongst them in 1522, the Nicoya Indians took their Christianity very seriously. Oviedo tells us that their Prince, who called himself Nambi, required that his subjects be referred to as Christians, not Indians. They never rose in revolt and always remained submissive to the Spaniards, which did not prevent the Spaniards, however, from visiting upon them the most cruel treatment and almost completely destroying this intelligent, cultivated and courageous people.

The Nahuas, or Aztecs, very numerous in Nicaragua, and particularly in the Isthmus of Rivas, possessed in Costa Rica but two small colonies: one in the north and the other in the southern part of the country. The first and most ancient was located in Bagaces, a place which still preserves its name in the Province of Guanacaste; the second, composed of Chichimeca Indians mixed with those of other races, occupied the valley of Coaza, or Duy, between the Tarire and Tararia, or Tilorio rivers (also called Sixaola and Changuinola), and the Island of Tójar (or Colón), in Almirante Bay. This last-mentioned colony marks the limit reached by the ex-



TERRA COTTA VASE FROM NICOYA.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

pansions of the Mexicans in Central America.²³ It is most probable that the Chichimecas of Talamanca arrived in Costa Rica at a period subsequent to the immigration of the Caribs who established themselves on the Atlantic coast, because the latter referred to them as the *Cicuas*, or *Siguas*, which in their language signifies foreigners. In a document written toward the end of the sixteenth century,²⁴ it is stated that they had come to Talamanca to collect the tribute of gold which the Caribs were accustomed to pay to the Emperor Montezuma; that while there they received news of the arrival of the Spanish in Mexico, and that for this reason they remained. The customs of the ancient Mexicans are too well known to require further description here. The Nahuas imported into Costa Rica the seed of the cacao, which was esteemed among all the Indians to such a degree that the *caciques* and nobles reserved the use of it to themselves.

The greater part of Costa Rica and the most

²³ In the Spanish edition of this history we suggest the hypothesis that these Mexican Indians could have been the descendants of the four hundred Chichimecas that Rodrigo de Contreras brought from Nicaragua in 1540; but a document published afterward proves that the Indians of Coaza spoke Nahuatl, for the appellation *Motolin* was applied by their principal *cacique* to Rodrigo de Contreras. See León Fernández—*Documentos para la Historia de Costa Rica*, vol. VII, p. 188.

²⁴ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 100.

salubrious, however, was occupied by the Caribs, whom Bishop Thiel classified as the Guetares and Viceitas. According to well-established belief, they originated in Brazil, whence they passed into Venezuela, later distributing themselves among the Antilles and along the coasts of the Caribbean Sea, to which they gave their name. The Guetares lived in the central highlands and extended themselves along the slopes of both oceans to within short distances of the coasts. They formed two nations, each governed by a prince or leading *cacique*. The two princes who governed during the period of the conquest were Garabito and Guarco.²⁵

The domain of Garabito began at the Virilla River, very near the city of San José (now the capital of Costa Rica), and extended towards the Pacific as far as the Tilarán and La Herradura mountains. The principal centers of population were in the valleys of the Santa Cruz, Pacaca, Tabarcia and Garabito. The domain of Guarco began at the same river, Virilla, and, after crossing the Great Cordillera, extended towards the Atlantic to within a short distance of the San Juan River, on one side, and on the other to Chirripó, the frontier of Talamanca, embracing the valleys of the Guarco, Ujarraz,

²⁵ Guarco died during the conquest and was succeeded by his son Correque, who was baptized with the name of Don Fernando Correque.

Orosí, Tucurrique, Atirro, Moravia, Chirripó, Matina and the plains of Santa Clara and Tortuguero. Because of their geographical situation, the two Guetare kingdoms may be differentiated under the names of Eastern Guetares and Western Guetares. The capital of the first was located in the Ujarraz valley, that of the second in the valley of Garabito. Both kingdoms were subdivided into numerous clans, ruled by predatory *caciques*. To such an extreme was this subdivision carried out that it may be said that each family separately governed itself, but acknowledged the superior authority of their respective kings, each of whom was surrounded by a court of nobles.

The Guetares were crafty and great lovers of liberty. The specimens brought to light by archæological research and attributed to them reveal a certain degree of culture. The Cabildo (municipal council) of Garcimuñoz describes them, in 1562,²⁶ as follows: "The people are rich, well disposed and not addicted to the custom of self mutilation for sacrificial purposes."²⁷ In their fabrics, wearing apparel and commercial methods they imitate the Indians of Peru.

²⁶ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. III, p. 15.

²⁷ This refers to the religious ceremonial prevailing amongst the Chorotegas in which the devotees cut themselves in various parts of the body and sprinkled their blood upon their idols and votive offerings.

They are beautiful of countenance, sharp and sagacious, learn our Spanish language, and, through the grace of God, will learn our Christian religion. All wear gold and jewelry." Vázquez de Coronado says of them that:²⁸ "They are of a lively disposition, warlike, of greater stature than others, and well built. In commercial subtlety they imitate the Mexicans. They wear cotton garments of extreme fineness and a great quantity of gold of all degrees of fineness." Like the Brunecas, they sacrificed persons of other races to their gods and the spirits of their parents. They possessed much skill in the art of working gold and hid their jewels, as they valued them highly. The wild hog and other wild animals were domesticated, among them the tapir, the meat of which was much esteemed by them, and the wild hog. In singing, dancing and drunkenness they found their greatest pleasure.

The other branch of the Caribs, the Viceitas, occupied the territory of Talamanca and the coasts of the Atlantic from the Matina River to the country of the Guaymís, situated opposite to and to the east of the island of the Escudo de Veragua. The inhabitants of the little village of Cariay, discovered by Columbus in 1502, be-

²⁸ Ricardo Fernández Guardia—*Cartas de Juan Vázquez de Coronado*, p. 13.



ANCIENT STONE FOR GRINDING MAIZE.

On this piece of carved granite the Guetares ground their maize at the religious festivals of the harvest season. One of the most important relics of the American aborigines, now in National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

longed to this race. Later the Spaniards called them Tariacas, or Cariacas,²⁹ names analogous to the name Cariay, and all three analogous to the name Caraihs, or Caribs.³⁰ It may be assumed that these Caribs of Talamanca and of the Atlantic littoral immigrated to Costa Rica subsequently to their brothers, the Guetares, from whom they differed but little. They were extremely bellicose and constantly at war, to such a degree indeed that the Spaniards, in spite of vigorous and repeated endeavors, were never able to reduce them to a state of permanent submission, or to found within their territory any enduring settlement.

However, though these five indigenous races that were established in Costa Rica spoke different languages, practiced distinct religions and lived in a state of almost continuous warfare, they resembled each other in many of their customs and in their manner of living. The Corobicís spoke the language of that name, which was reputed to be very beautiful, and it is probable that from it is derived that of the present day Guatusos, their descendants—a language that differs wholly from the other Indian tongues of

²⁹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, pp. 289, 296.

³⁰ In Brazil there is a river called Carial, an affluent of the Xingu, and in Venezuela there are two places that bear the name Cariaco. The name Caracas also would seem to have the same origin.

Costa Rica. The language of the Bruncas is still spoken by the few remaining Indians of Boruca. The Chorotegas spoke Mangué; the Nahuas, Nahuatl or Mexican. The Caribs made use of several, all of the same origin, but the dominant tongue among them was the Guetar, spoken in the kingdoms of the East and West. This was also the language most generally used among the Viceitas. From it are derived the present dialects of Talamanca and Térraba, and the circumstance that the very scarce, pure-blooded descendants of the Guetares had retained no recollection whatever of the language of their ancestors led to the belief that this language had perished. There is in existence a document bearing date of the year 1617 that proves that Guetar was also "the mother tongue and principal language" of Talamanca.³¹ This accords with the great resemblance existing between the geographical names of Guetar origin and those of Talamanca.

Up to the present time scarcely any study has been made of the religions of the Indians of Costa Rica. From the available meager data respecting them, one may conclude that in general they believed in a supreme being, who was the creator of all things, and in the immortality of the soul. They worshiped the sun, the

³¹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 219.

moon and the elements of nature, personified by the gods of water, fire and the winds. The Brunecas believed that the first man was born of a seed dropped on the earth by an owl sent by God; the Caribs believed that men, animals and plants alike proceeded from seeds sown by *Sibú*, the name then and still given by them to the Supreme Being. Both made frequent human sacrifices in their religious ceremonies—the Caribs on the occurrence of each new moon. On the death of a master, his slaves were sacrificed in order that they might serve him in the life beyond, and arms, household utensils, seeds and jewels were deposited for the same purpose in the sepulchers, or tombs. In the harvest season great religious festivals were held, at which there were sacrifices, votive offerings, dances, singing and much drunkenness.

Only the Mangues and Nahuas, following the custom of the Mexican Indians, ate human flesh, which was considered by them to be sacred food, though it has been established that the Chichimecas of Talamanca had abandoned this custom by the year 1540, doubtless because of their having mixed with the Caribs, who looked upon the custom with great repugnance. The religion of the Nahuas and their sanguinary worship of Huitzilopochtli, the God of War, are well known. The Mangues worshiped various gods

and looked upon the sun as the supreme divinity, in this regard resembling the Peruvians. In the celebration of certain rites they sacrificed men, extracting the heart, which they offered to the sun, and gashed various parts of the body, sprinkling with its blood the offerings of the products of the soil made to the idols. Yet in spite of their common Mexican origin, these two peoples were very different.

In respect of social relations, the status maintained by all the aborigines of Costa Rica was very similar. There were two castes: the nobility and the servile, both hereditary in character. Obedience and deference to the *cacique* and to the head of the family constituted the basis of their ethics. The priests, who were also the medical men, soothsayers and practicers of witchcraft, likewise formed a privileged class. The rank of *cacique* was generally transmitted through the women, as is still the custom in Talamanca. They were governed by very strict laws, established by tradition, and which were instantly obeyed; those concerning matrimony were rigid and very complicated. The ordinary occupations of the men, aside from war, were hunting, fishing, agriculture and the industrial arts; the women devoted themselves to domestic duties, in some of the tribes to the cultivation of the soil and the spinning of cotton cloth.



TERRA COTTA VASE FROM NICOYA.

Showing on its four sides the theogony of the Aztecs. In National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

Generally they were cleanly, for it was their custom to bathe themselves several times a day. Submissive as they were to the authority of their superiors, they, however, greatly loved their liberty. Craft, dissimulation and suspicion were the distinguishing features of their character. They were cruel and implacable toward their adversaries, yet exhibited stoic resignation in misfortune. The sense of ownership over property was not deeply rooted in them; among the individuals of a family or tribe a sort of fraternal communism prevailed.

From the foregoing description it will be seen that the aborigines of Costa Rica had reached some degree of culture, yet as was the case with all primitive Americans, they lacked certain elements necessary for the development of civilized life, such as iron, cattle yielding milk and flesh, and animals for use as beasts of burden and in agricultural employments.

In a very rudimentary manner they cultivated the soil. Their implements of labor consisted of hatchets of stone, copper and sometimes of gold, used for felling trees and making the wooden stakes with which they planted their seed. Only the Mangles used spades, which they made of large shells. The basis of their food was maize, and in the planting of the grain they alternated the fields, to avoid exhaustion of the soil. They

also maintained permanent plantations of cacao and other fruits. In many of the industries they were very skillful, among others in the weaving of cotton and the manufacture of terra-cotta cooking utensils. Also they had a method of cutting and carving stone, even the hardest, by some process now unknown, and made golden jewelry of most original design, first modeling the figure in wax and afterwards taking an impression of it by covering it with a layer of clay. When this had been done, the clay mold so formed was baked in an oven. The wax melted and ran out through a small orifice, and the gold, having been melted in a crucible, was poured into its place.

In the National Museum of Costa Rica there are many specimens taken from the native tombs or sepulchers that reveal an artistic taste of no small degree of refinement, notably some clay vessels found in Nicoya, which, because of their grace of form and embossed and painted decorations, take rank as veritable works of art. These Indians, too, were skilled in wood carving but specimens of this art are exceedingly rare, for naturally they have been destroyed by the action of the elements. The drawings, paintings and sculptures of the ancient Indians of Costa Rica represent men, animals and geometric figures; rarely anything else.

The principal articles of the commerce in

which they engaged were slaves, golden ornaments, cacao, fruits, cotton cloth, pottery, *chaquiras* (beads made from shells from which necklaces were fashioned), also rosin from the *caraña* tree (used in embalming bodies), tapirs and wild hogs, domesticated for killing at their festivals, and maize. Their dwellings consisted of lofty huts in the form of cones, built of rough, forked poles or cane stalks and covered with dried palm leaves skillfully interlaced. To these huts the Spaniards gave the name of *palenque* when they were of large dimensions. But, with the exception of the Chorotegas, who had towns of some importance, and the Cotos, who maintained fortified villages, the Indians were scattered over the country and did not group themselves in communities of more than three or four *palenques*. The Viceitas located their houses on the summits of the hills for better defense against attacks of their enemies. Up to the present time in Costa Rica no ruins have been found of any ancient cities built of stone, such as exist in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras.

According to the calculations of Bishop Thiel, the population of Costa Rica at the period of the discovery and conquest of the country by the Spaniards reached barely 27,200, distributed as follows: Corobicís and Votos, 900; Borucas, or Bruncas, 1,000; Chorotegas, 18,200; Nahuas, or

Aztecs, 400; Caribs, 11,700 (8,500 Guetares and 8,200 Viceitas). At first sight these figures appear to be too small when compared with the stories told by the *conquistadores*, who speak of great numbers of Indians; but on this point account must be taken of the tendency of the Spaniards to exaggerate in their reports of the richness and population of the conquered countries in order to enhance the importance of their personal achievements. In contrast with this, all the documents of the colonial period speak of the scarcity of the Indians, and these latter statements are confirmed by the fact that there are to-day in Costa Rica very few pure representatives of the aboriginal races, which is the reverse of the condition existing in other countries of Central America that were conquered and governed in the same manner.



A PALENQUE.

CHAPTER II

DISCOVERY OF THE ATLANTIC COAST OF COSTA RICA
BY CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS—INDIAN VILLAGE OF
CARLAY AND THE ISLAND OF QUIRIBRI—CHARACTER
AND CONDITION OF THE INHABITANTS—THE BAY OF
ZOROBARÓ—VERAGUA

TEN years had passed since the dawn of that 12th day of October, 1492, when like an apparition the island of Guanahaní arose before Columbus out of the dread Sea of Darkness—ten years prolific in discoveries. Hayti, Cuba, Porto Rico, Jamaica, Martinique, Trinidad and many others of the Antilles made their appearance in succession before the caravels of the dauntless navigator; and finally, on the 1st of August, 1498, the last veil that had shrouded the mystery of the new world had been torn asunder and, in its turn, the American continent had burst from the immensity of the Atlantic, greeting him with one of its marvels, the delta of the Orinoco.

The great man, however, did not know that he had come upon a new world; he always believed that these strange lands were the sentinels of Asia. But, with an intuition peculiar to his genius, he surmised that there must exist some-

where among them a passage to the Indian Ocean and thus reached the conclusion that it would be found in the latitude of the Isthmus of Panama, then still undiscovered. At that point he hoped to find a strait. The search for it was the motive for his fourth and last voyage.

Once more he set sail from Cádiz on the 11th of May, 1502. Included in his ships' company were his brother Bartolomé, his illegitimate son Fernando, a youth of thirteen years, and one hundred and forty men distributed among the four ships: *Capitana*, *Santiago de Palos*, *Gallega* and *Vizcaína*. The squadron steered first for the fortified Lusitanian city of Arzila on the Moroccan coast, which was undergoing a siege by the Moors, and which Columbus wished to relieve in passing. He found, however, that the blockade had been raised. Then, aided by favorable winds, he continued the voyage, dropping anchor off the Grand Canary four days after his departure from Arzila. Later he made port at Santa Lucía and Martinique, and then, because of the unseaworthy condition of the *Gallega*, proceeded to the island of Española (Hayti) in search of another vessel, this in spite of a formal prohibition against entering that port which had been imposed upon him as a result of those early disturbances in the colony that brought about the imprisonment of the Admiral

and his brothers and their deportation to Spain, in 1500, by the *Comendador*,¹ Francisco de Bobadilla.

On the 20th of June he arrived off the colony of Santo Domingo, at that time under the governorship of Fray Nicolás de Ovando, and hove to a league from land. The Governor absolutely denied satisfaction in response to Columbus' petitions. Not only was he forbidden to disembark, in accordance with an order emanating from the Crown, but he was prevented from securing the needed vessel, either by purchase or exchange. The Admiral thereupon sought permission at least to take refuge within the port until a severe storm should have passed, which, according to his calculations, was then approaching, and in this had no better success. Doubtless the Governor believed the request to be but a mere pretext, for the weather at the moment was clear and quiet.

Nothing remained to Columbus, therefore, but to resume the voyage, though before leaving he again repaired to Fr. Nicolás de Ovando, this time, however, not to seek a favor, but for the purpose of rendering a great service both to his royal patrons and his own enemies. Aware that a fleet composed of thirty ships, laden with

¹ Knight Commander of a military order—in this instance the order of Alcántara. *Translator.*

riches, was on the point of leaving Santo Domingo for Spain, he sent a message advising that the fleet be detained for eight days until the threatened storm should have passed. Unfortunately the sailors proved skeptical; even the most favorably inclined accused him of being a foreboder of evil and a false prophet, and so the fleet set sail and perished almost in its entirety within view of the people of the island—a victim of the Antillean hurricane that the Admiral's extraordinary genius had enabled him to foresee. In the catastrophe, Bobadilla, Roldán and many other enemies of Columbus met their deaths; before the terrified gaze of the onlookers, the waves swallowed up 100,000 *pesos*—an enormous sum for those times, and a fabulous nugget of pure gold valued at 8,600 *castellanos*.²

Columbus then sought shelter at Puerto Hermoso on the western side of the island. Later he went to the port of Yaquimo,³ and, on the 14th of July, proceeded on his way, beset by calms, powerful currents that carried him near the islands of Cuba and Jamaica, and violent storms in which many times he was in danger of being lost. "Other tempests have been ex-

²The value of this sum may be stated to be in excess of \$20,000 at the present value of money.

³Jacmel, in Hayti.



QUEEN ISABELLA THE CATHOLIC.

From a painting in the Royal Palace at Madrid. This is the only authentic portrait of the Queen.

perienced," he writes to the Catholic Kings,⁴ "but none of such long duration or so terrifying." The vessels were reduced to a most deplorable condition, taking water through many openings. The violent winds had destroyed the sails; many anchors and small boats were missing. The crews were greatly weakened by fatigue and the discouragements that had weighed down the hearts of all, yet with invincible resistance the great soul of Columbus met the wrath of nature loosed against his fragile barks. The illustrious mariner was prostrated by his cruel sufferings and bowed beneath the weight of years, but he did not give up. Racked with acute rheumatic pains, he lay helpless in a little cabin constructed by his orders on the deck of the *Capitana*, and from that post directed the course of his ships.

On the 30th of July he discovered the island of Guanaja, near the Gulf of Honduras. Here he captured a great canoe, eight feet wide and as long as a galley, which had approached from the west. This vessel, covered over by an awning of matting impervious to rain, was laden

⁴Navarrete—Vol. I, p. 296. Letter from Christopher Columbus to the Catholic Kings, written at Jamaica on the 7th of July, 1503. The name of Catholic Kings is given to Queen Isabel I. of Castile and to King Fernando V. of Aragón, whose marriage brought the union of the several kingdoms in which Spain was parceled in the XVth century.

with merchandise, richly embroidered *mantas*⁵ of cotton, sleeveless shirts, hatchets and disks of copper, bells, cacao, crucibles for melting metals and wooden swords with flint-edged blades, enclosed in sheaths.⁶ The canoe was manned by twenty-five men; also there were several women, who on coming aboard the *Capitana* modestly covered their bodies with their cotton *mantas*. With the exception of an old man, who was pressed into service as a guide, the Admiral granted them all their liberty. This old man, when questioned respecting places where gold was to be found, pointed towards the east.

In August Columbus discovered the continent of North America and dropped anchor at the headland of Cajinas, or Cape Honduras, where, on the 14th, his men landed and celebrated mass, the *Adelantado*⁷ Don Bartolomé assisting. From that point, keeping always close to the coast in search of the elusive strait, and struggling continuously with the tempestuous seas, he continued the voyage eastward. On the 12th of September he doubled the cape to which he

⁵ Blanket-like garments resembling shawls. *Translator.*

⁶ Las Casas—*Historia de las Indias*, Vol. III, p. 109.

⁷ The rank of Governor of a Province, given by the Crown to its great captains whose armies gradually advanced the sovereignty of Spain over all of the Moorish provinces of the Peninsula; the title was then, by way of analogy, bestowed on the leaders of the early adventurers who pushed forward the limits of the Spanish domain in the new world—from *adelantar*, to advance, to go forward. *Translator.*

gave the name of *Gracias á Dios* ("Thanks be to God"), for from this point on the weather improved, and here the old guide from Guanaja was given his liberty. On the 16th of September Columbus lost one of the *Vizcaína's* boats at the mouth of the Desastre⁸ River, so called because of this event. Still keeping always close to the coast, he thence continued his exploration, and at length hove to between a small island called Quiribrí and the village of Cariay, on the mainland.

According to the distances marked out on the chart of the *escribano* (notary), Diego de Porras, a fellow-voyager of the Admiral, Cariay was undoubtedly located within Costa Rican territory.⁹ It has been demonstrated that the situation of the place corresponds with that of the port of Limón.¹⁰ The little island of Quiribrí is known to-day by the name of La Uvita (Grape Key). On Sunday, the 18th of September, 1502,¹¹ Columbus cast anchor at Cariay, and determined to remain in the little bay for several days in order to repair his ships and give his men,

⁸ Very probably the river Rama in Nicaragua.

⁹ León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, pp. 524, 525.

¹⁰ Bernardo Augusto Thiel, Bishop of Costa Rica—Supplement to the *Gaceta*, No. 118, of November 18, 1900.

¹¹ Cleto González Víquez—*El Noticiero*, No. 991, of September 27, 1905. Las Casas fixes the date of Columbus' arrival at Cariay as September 25th, but Señor González Víquez shows clearly that this is an error.

who were sick and exhausted from their severe labors, a short rest. The beauty of the mainland, covered with splendid forests, lofty green mountains and fresh rivers, the agreeableness of Quiribrí Island, which the Admiral called La Huerta¹² because it appeared to be "a garden of delight" (as Fr. Bartolomé de las Casas says), the aspect of the natives, who went about clothed and wearing golden eagles at their throats, and the great number of rare animals to be seen there, all added to the wonder and admiration the new world had inspired in the discoverers.

Armed with bows and arrows, clubs and sharp palm-wood spears, however, the natives of Cariay, on descrying the ships, grouped themselves in a hostile attitude on the shore of a river that ran beside their village.¹³ Under or-

¹²The Orchard.

¹³The Limón or Cieneguita River, to which the natives gave the name of Carlarí—that is, the river of Cariay. The present day Indians of Talamanca call it Quereldí and give the name Querey to the port. Bernardo Augusto Thiel—Supplement to the *Gaceta*, No. 118, of November 18, 1900. Father Las Casas and Don Fernando Columbus speak of a great river. The Limón is a small river, although navigable at its mouth. Furthermore, there are indications that it drained the waters of the Banano.

General Don Fernando Francisco de Escobedo, President of the Audiencia of Guatemala, in a report addressed to the King in 1675, makes the following statement: "Very near this *Portete* there is the outlet of a river called *Caray* which forms a large bay with an entrance narrow and short, and in this entrance is an islet very well suited for a fortification for



GOLDEN ORNAMENTS WORN BY ABORIGINES OF COSTA RICA.
In National Museum of Costa Rica.

ders that no one should land until they had quieted down, the Admiral sent several small boats ashore. Whereupon, convinced by this that there was no purpose to molest them, the natives changed their attitude, and making signs to the Spaniards to land on the beach, waved their cotton *mantas* in the air after the fashion of flags, as a token of invitation to barter. Finally, seeing that these signals produced no effect, the more venturesome plunged into the water and swam out to the boats with their merchandise; but, by express command of Columbus, whose idea was to convey the impression that neither he nor his followers were covetous of their possessions, the crews gave them various trifles as presents but would accept nothing in return.¹⁴ On their part, the Indians showed an increasing desire to establish commercial relations with the strangers.

On Wednesday, the 21st of September, the boats having again approached the shore, an old man of most respectable mien came down to them, carrying in his hand a flag flying from the end of a pole, and accompanied by two little

defense of the two channels at the sides of the islet." León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VIII, p. 348.

¹⁴ In this connection, Don Fernando Columbus states in his *Historia del Almirante de las Indias, Don Cristóbal Colón*, chap. XCI: " * * * The Admiral was careful on this voyage to take nothing away with him beyond specimens of things found on the shores visited."

girls of eleven and twelve years of age, gaily decorated and wearing about their necks ornaments of gold. He made the girls enter one of the boats, and, later, by gesticulations, indicated to the Spaniards that they could disembark without fear. On this he insisted so strongly that the sailors resolved to go ashore for water. No sooner had they set foot on land than they found a well-made pack containing all the articles they had bestowed upon the Indians at Cariay several days before. The Padre Las Casas, always favorably inclined towards the Indians, thinks that they did this because of a high sense of honor, but Don Fernando Columbus, an eye witness, and probably all the others present, attributed the act to fear of witchcraft, to which, as indicated by appearances, the people of Cariay were much addicted. For instance, on the approach of strangers, the Indians would cast into the air certain powders that liberated an odorous vapor. But it is probable that these demonstrations were merely to show respect, judging from the experiences noted by Hernán Cortés and his soldiers in Mexico.¹⁵

However that may be, in order to show their pacific intentions, the Indians never failed to

¹⁵ Bernal Díaz del Castillo—*Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, Vol. I, p. 114, of the only edition made from the ancient holographic manuscript of Don Genaro García. Mexico, 1904.

keep at a distance during the whole of the time the Spaniards remained on shore. Once when the latter had returned to the boats with the water and were preparing to set out for their ships, the old man of the flag again approached, this time with several youths,¹⁶ who also wore *guanines*¹⁷ about their necks, and made signs that they wished to be taken aboard, together with the two little girls. After much urging by the old man, the Spaniards took them out to the ships, where the Admiral received them with great kindness, and caused food to be given them, but ordered also that clothing be brought to the girls, whose astonishing immodesty and boldness in the presence of men, particularly strangers, occasioned the greatest surprise among all, and incited Columbus to apply to them the most infamous name that could be applied to a woman.¹⁸ With a proper regard to decency, therefore, he immediately had them taken back to land. On the beach were gathered fifty Indians, who appeared greatly rejoiced at seeing the girls and young men returned to them safe and sound. As the old man was among them, it was to him that they were delivered. Later, the boats having again gone ashore and encountered the same Indians, the little girls, who were still

¹⁶ Don Fernando Columbus. *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Ornaments of gold of a low standard.

¹⁸ Navarrete. *Ibid.*

with them, returned to the Spaniards everything that had been given them aboard the ship. The others who had visited it with them did likewise.

The day following, Don Bartolomé Columbus having gone ashore on a tour of investigation, two of the principal men among the natives went out to receive him at the boat. Each, with demonstrations of respect, took him by the arm and induced him to sit beside them on the grass, but when Don Bartolomé began to question them and caused a scrivener to take down their answers, the Indians were greatly terrified at the sight of pen and paper and nearly all of them ran away—in the belief, no doubt, that these utensils had to do with evil spirits.

When the ships had been repaired and provisioned with all they had need of, the Admiral decided to resume the voyage. Before doing so, however, he sent Don Bartolomé back to the shore with several soldiers and instructions to go about among the Indian hamlets for the purpose of forming an idea of the country and its inhabitants. On the 2nd of October the Adelantado visited some of the near-by *palenques*. In one of the largest of them, built of wood and roofed with matted reeds, he noted with surprise that the Indians had sepulchres, in which he found embalmed bodies enveloped in cotton *mantas* and adorned with golden ornaments and



ORNAMENTS OF DIFFERENT-COLORED STONES.

Worn as necklaces. In National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

strings of beads. The sepulchers themselves were covered by boards and carved with figures representing men and animals.

These and other evidences of the accomplishments of the natives of Cariay led the Admiral to form a very good opinion of them, with the result that he concluded to carry one away with him to serve as a guide along the coast. By his orders seven were captured. Of these he selected two who appeared to be of the principal men of the place. The others he liberated after having beguiled them by means of gifts and other marks of friendship into believing that those he was detaining were to be held, not as prisoners, but merely in the capacity of guides. Nevertheless the Indians, either because they did not understand Columbus' intention or because they did not assent to his purpose, assembled in great numbers on the beach the following morning, bearing metal ornaments, *mantas*, cotton shirts and other articles in which it was their custom to trade, and despatched four of their number to the *Capitana* to negotiate for the release of the prisoners. But the Admiral, more and more admiring the intelligence of these people, did not permit himself to be moved by their prayers or offerings, but adhered to his determination to take the guides away with him and got rid of the emissaries with plausible arguments and some

trifling presents, which he caused to be given them in exchange for two pigs that had been brought off to him from shore as a present. When he sailed away from Cariay, the Indians were very much incensed over the plight of their comrades. This perhaps was the origin of the implacable hatred of Spaniards that was always shown in the years following by the natives of that coast.

From the data that have come down to us concerning the Indians of Cariay, it may be inferred that they had attained a culture comparable with that of the inhabitants of the eastern coast of Mexico. "They were of a very amiable disposition," writes Diego de Porras, "very acute, inquisitive and displayed much surprise and interest in whatever was shown them." Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas tells us that they were "the best of the peoples * * * met with up to that time,"—"the most intelligent," says Don Fernando Columbus. The men had long hair, which they wore in braids, wound about the head; the women wore theirs short. These Indians cultivated, and knew the art of weaving cotton; from it they made the *mantas* and sleeveless shirts that constituted their clothing. According to Diego de Porras, the women wore small kerchiefs made of *mastate*.¹⁹ They were familiar too with

¹⁹Textile used by the Indians for clothing, which was made

the art of making gold ornaments in the shape of eaglets, which they hung from their neck; also, judging from their mortuary structures and the designs on the tablets that covered their sepulchers, they were not strangers to the rudiments of the wood carver's art. They also embalmed bodies,²⁰ and possessed other accomplishments which the historians do not specify. In this connection, Columbus himself writes: "They told me of other arts, and most excellent. * * * They say that over there are great mines of copper. I saw axes and other objects wrought, molded and soldered in that metal, and forges equipped with all the paraphernalia of the silversmith; likewise crucibles. The people wear clothes; in that province may be seen cotton *mantas*, some of them most cunningly embroidered, others skillfully painted in colors by means of small brushes."

The charge of witchcraft does not seem unmerited when one considers that the Spaniards also gave credit to similar myths. Often, as is related by the Admiral in his famous letter from from the bark of the tree called *mastate*, and also from that of the rubber tree. *Translator.*

²⁰ With a resinous gum. For a knowledge of the arts and customs of our Indians on the Atlantic Coast one should read the memorial which, in 1610, Fray Augustín de Ceballos addressed to the King. It agrees perfectly with the relations of Columbus, of his son Don Fernando and the Padre Las Casas. León Fernández—*Colección de Documentos para la Historia Costa Rica*, Vol. V, p. 156.

Jamaica,²¹ they believed themselves to have been bewitched. What does strike one as strange is the facility with which the Indians of Cariay entered into relations with the discoverers, who must have appeared in their eyes as extraordinary beings, yet this may be explained by the custom they undoubtedly had of trading with strangers. It is known to be a fact that Mexican navigators ventured along the coasts of Central America in their great canoes.²² The one captured at Guanaja probably came from Yucatán. The wooden swords with flint-edged blades were of Aztec origin; no others were used by the warriors of that nation.²³ As to the incense employed as a mark of respect, no trace of it was afterwards found among the Indians of Costa Rica, and it is permissible to conclude from this that the Cariay Indians got this also from the Anahuac (Mexican) traders. Their barter with these traders also explains the sending aboard ship of the gaily adorned youths and young girls, if one may judge by the licentious customs of the Mexicans, especially those who inhabited the Atlantic coast of that country.²⁴

²¹ "When I sailed upon that sea, worn out by fatigue, many were convinced that we were bewitched, and even to this day the belief possesses them."

²² Brasseur de Bourbourg—*Histoire des Nations civilisées du Mexique et de l'Amérique Centrale*, Vol. III, p. 432. León Fernández—*Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 243.

²³ Bernal Díaz del Castillo—*Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 180, 282.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 476. In 1540 Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz



GOLDEN DISK ORNAMENT.

Similar to those given Columbus by the Indians of Carlay. In National Museum
of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

After having remained seventeen days at Cariay, the Admiral weighed anchor, on the 5th of October, and set out in quest of Zorobaró, one of the places mentioned by the old man seized at Guanaja as being rich in gold. The following day he discovered the splendid bay that bears his name.²⁵ From the briefness of the sail, it may be remarked in passing, it is self-evident that Cariay lay within Costa Rican territory, above all when it is taken into consideration that during this part of his fourth voyage, Columbus never journeyed at night for fear of passing the strait without seeing it.²⁶

The ships entered through channels that separated the islands as by streets, some so narrow that the rigging touched the branches of the trees—"a very refreshing and beautiful sight," says the Padre Las Casas. Anchors down, Columbus despatched his boats to an island where some twenty canoes were seen, fashioned from tree trunks. On the beach were Indians, naked except for mirrors or disks of fine gold, which some wore at the neck; others wore eaglets of a

came upon a colony of Mexican Indians at Talamanca, as did Vázquez de Coronado in 1564.

²⁵ Almirante Bay, or Zorobaró.

²⁶ "Never for a single day did he separate himself from the coast of this land and every night he anchored off shore." Diego de Porras—*Relación del viage é de la tierra agora nuevamente descubierta por el Almirante Don Cristóbal Colón.*

tected behind defensive works, which they had constructed of branches on the beach during the night. Often as they were called upon to come out, they refused to leave their barriers, answering instead by gesticulations bidding the strangers return to their ships. Before long, noting that the boats had not departed, they rushed from the works, with a blast of war horns, and made menacing gestures in the water, and so irritated the Spaniards by their audacity that they wounded one in the arm with a bolt from a cross-bow and fired a *lombarda* (Lombardy gun), which sufficed to put them all to flight. Whereupon four of the Spaniards sprang upon the beach and began to call the fugitives, who at length returned and laid down their weapons. On this occasion but three mirrors were exchanged for the already familiar hawk bells, for that time, as they declared, they had not come to barter but to fight.

From Guaiga Columbus proceeded to Catiba, where he was going to anchor near the shores of a great river. The Indians, greatly alarmed, assembled to the sound of war horns and tom-toms; but later two of them, betraying no fear, came out to the ships in a canoe and went aboard the *Capitana*. By advice of the Indians of Cariay, they made a present of their golden mirrors to the Admiral, who, in his turn, gave them a few



NICOYAN TERRA COTTA VASE.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

gewgaws. Later, when the visitors had returned to land, three more natives came aboard and similarly disposed of their mirrors. Amicable rela-



THE COURSE FOLLOWED BY COLUMBUS.

tions being thus established, the Spaniards landed, and a large number of Indians presented themselves, headed by their *cacique*, or chief,

who, by way of example, was the first to barter away his golden disk.

From thence the Admiral directed his course towards Cobraba, but, as the winds were not favorable, made no stop, though he passed various villages, where the Indians assured him there was much gold. The last of these was Veragua, where he was told that the mirrors were made. Passing on to Cubiga, however, which, according to the Cariay guides, marked the end of the gold country that had its beginning in Zorobaró, he continued, always along the coast, until he arrived at the port of Retrete (now called Escribanos), which had been discovered two years before, in 1500, by Rodrigo de Bastidas, coming in the opposite direction from that taken by the Admiral. And here because no traces of gold were seen, he determined to return towards Veragua. But, as his ships could not enter the river of that name, he proceeded to the Yebra or Belén River, at the mouth of which he founded the colony of Santa María de Belén, in the territory of Panama. This he was soon forced to abandon for lack of provisions and because of the ferocity of the natives. It was the first of the many set-backs that were to be suffered by the Spaniards on that coast.

Nevertheless, to this last discovery Columbus

himself attached an exaggerated importance. The golden mirrors of the inhabitants of Zoroboró and Veragua, the rich mines of the locality explored by his brother Don Bartolomé, the fabulous stories told by the Indians, led him to believe that he had reached no less a place than the Aurea Chersonesus of the ancients (known to-day as the Malacca Peninsula), for he died in the conviction that it was to Asia that these lands that had been found by him belonged. "I esteem this business and these mines, with this seaport and seigniory, to be of greater importance than all others achieved in the Indies," he wrote to the Catholic Kings, and added: "One thing must be said, because there are so many to bear witness, and that is that I saw in this land of Veragua greater evidence of gold in the first two days than in Española in four years."

From that time on, one of his chief anxieties was that Veragua might be plucked from his golden dream. With a zeal worthy of a better cause, he contrived to guard until his death the secret of the exact position on the globe occupied by that land.

CHAPTER III

DIEGO DE NICUESA IN VERAGUA—THE MISFORTUNES
OF THAT HIGH-SPIRITED COMMANDER—THE ISLAND
OF THE ESCUDO

1504-1511

RETURNING from his last voyage, Columbus arrived in Spain on the 7th of November, 1504. A short time after this died the Catholic Queen who had so greatly favored him and on whose good will he based his hopes of securing the fulfillment of the obligations entered into with him by the Crown when he launched forth on his perilous undertaking. Notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, the King, Don Fernando, did not receive him badly. Only the monarch was too astute a politician not to recognize that there was a risk of jeopardizing vital interests of his own in confirming to the Admiral the great privileges that had been conceded.

Among these was the grant of an hereditary viceroyalty at an enormous distance from the metropolis. In full justice to the discoverer, he should have been given what was his due, but it



GOLDEN DISK ORNAMENT.

National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

must be considered that on the part of the King there militated powerful reasons of state for evading fulfillment of the promises made. Don Fernando strongly desired to compose the conflicting interests of the monarchy and the Admiral by awarding him some compensation, but the latter would not make even the smallest concession in respect of his rights. In the midst of this controversy, Columbus was overtaken by death, in an inn at Valladolid, on the 20th of May, 1506.

In the meantime the great fame of Veragua's riches had spread abroad, propagated by Columbus himself and by his companions. Among these were navigators too expert to permit the location of so marvelous a land to remain hidden. Furthermore, certain intrepid adventurers, following the tracks of the Admiral, had explored the coasts of the continent, touching at places as near Veragua as the gulf of Darién and the port of Retrete.

The death of the immortal navigator kindled in many hearts the desire to profit by his discoveries. Thus it was that in spite of the suit brought by his son and heir, Don Diego Columbus, before the judicial tribunal for the recovery of the right denied him by the Crown, the King conferred the government of Veragua upon Diego de Nicuesa, a noble and gallant gentle-

man from the city of Baeza, then domiciled on the island of Española, who had been brought up in the house of Don Enrique Enríquez, an uncle of the Catholic King. Nicuesa, writes the Padre Las Casas, arrived at the island with the *Comendador mayor*, Fray Nicolás de Ovando.¹ Fernández de Oviedo states that he came with the Admiral on his second or third voyage.

However that may be, as he was a man of great prestige in the colony, Nicuesa had been chosen by the colonists to represent them at court as their attorney, to petition for the commission of the Indians to their charge in perpetuity, and by this opportunity he had profited to ask for the governorship of Veragua. Most powerful must have been the influence he brought to bear to secure the preferment in a matter so hotly contested and of such great importance, but his high lineage, his endowments as a courtier, his exquisite tact and fine gentility contributed not a little. According to Las Casas, "he was, among Castilians, one of the best endowed with all the graces and human per-

¹ Fray Nicolás de Ovando, before assuming the garb of Alcántara, was called Diego de Nicuesa. Years afterward he resumed his name under the license of the King and the Pope. This coincidence in name and appellation leads us to believe that the Diego de Nicuesa with whom we here have to deal was his relative and that it was with him that he must have arrived at Española. See León Fernández, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 455.

fections." A great horseman, a skillful jousting, of great valor, a master of the guitar, he made a very good appearance though small of body, and was a man of extraordinary vigor. It was but natural, therefore, to hope that an undertaking confided to such good hands would result most felicitously.

At the same time that Diego de Nicuesa was given the government of Veragua, a protégé of Bishop Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca obtained the grant of another on the continent contiguous with the first. To this the name Nueva Andalucía was given. The name of the favored one was Alonso de Ojeda, in many respects a worthy rival of the gallant Nicuesa. Ojeda had the advantage of the latter in experience, for he had traveled much by sea and in 1499, in association with the famous pilot Juan de la Cosa and Amerigo Vespucci, had discovered a considerable part of the coast of South America. The King prescribed the boundaries of Ojeda's government as from the middle of the gulf of Urabá, or Darién, to Cape de la Vela, while Nicuesa's were to begin at the same middle point of the gulf and extend up to Cape Gracias á Dios.² The island of

²Las Casas, Herrera and Navarrete give Cape Gracias á Dios as the boundary of Nicuesa's government, but Don León Fernández (*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 528) is of opinion that it reached as far as the Rio Grande, west of Cape Camarón, in Honduras. Don Manuel de Peralta (*Exposé des droits territoriaux de la République de Costa-Rica*)—Statement of the

Jamaica was placed within the jurisdiction of both governments, to serve as a common base of operations.

Having enriched himself in Española, Nicuesa fitted out at his own expense four great ships and two barkentines, supplied, on his habitual scale of lavishness, with every necessity for the expedition, and reached Santo Domingo in 1509, after having captured from one of the Caribbean islands on the way more than a hundred Indians whom he sold as slaves under the authority vested in him by the King. On his arrival at the colony, however, he had a serious dispute with Ojeda over the possession of Darién, as a consequence of which the two rivals were on the point of taking up arms against each other; and, on the other hand, Admiral Don Diego Columbus, who was much incensed by the concession of Jamaica and Veragua—these being lands that he regarded as belonging in justice to himself—stirred up many difficulties through the medium of his *Alcalde mayor*,³ Marcos de Aguilar, who

Territorial Rights of the Republic of Costa Rica) says that the Queen, Doña Juana, did not fix any limit to this government in her decree of June 9, 1508. By this name of Veragua was designated, in the beginning, all of the coast of the American continent discovered by Columbus in 1502—that is to say, the littoral comprised between Cape Honduras and the port of Retrete, known to-day as the port of Escribanos. The name of Veragua is still preserved in one of the provinces of the Republic of Panama.

³ Under the Spanish colonial régime, the mayor of a town of

hampered him with restrictions and caused the creditors he had created in incurring the enormous expenses entailed by the expedition, to set upon him like a pack of hounds.

But all this proved no insurmountable obstacle, for there were many who, attracted by his liberality and graciousness, hastened to enroll themselves under his banner—in such numbers, indeed, that it became necessary for him to buy another ship. As Captain-General of the Armada he named Lope de Olano, one of those who with Roldán had risen against Columbus. On the 20th or 22nd of November, 1509, he set sail, carrying 700 men and five horses, and made land at Cartagena. Here he met Ojeda's people, who had arrived a few days before, and learned from them of the tremendous misfortune inflicted on their chief and Juan de la Cosa by the Indians at Calamarí. Ojeda remained in hiding, fearful lest his rival should profit by his misfortune to settle old scores, but the generous Nicuesa, nobly casting aside all rancor, sent for him and offered him his aid, and then the two captains together wreaked on the Indians a terrible and pitiless vengeance for the death of Juan de la Cosa and the hundred other Spaniards who had perished, victims of their poisoned arrows. From Carta-

lesser importance than the capital of a province: one who, though not necessarily a lawyer, exercised judicial functions similar to those of a justice of the peace. *Translator.*

gena, hugging the coast and followed at close quarters by the two brigantines, and, at a greater distance, by the ships of heavier tonnage, Nicuesa soon afterwards resumed his expedition and arrived eventually off the coast of Veragua.

Here began the misfortunes that have made him celebrated in American history. First he was beset by a violent storm, and, finding no safe port in which to seek refuge, he stood out to sea before the night fell, believing that Lope de Olano would follow with the two barkentines under his command; at break of day they were not to be seen. Then, fearful lest misfortune had overtaken the Captain-General, Nicuesa returned to the coast in search of him, and was about to drop anchor in a great river, at the moment swollen by the rains, when the waters quickly subsided and the caravel, left aground, was soon pounded to pieces by the swift current. After indescribable hardships, Nicuesa and his companions were able to save their lives, only to find themselves lost on an uninhabited beach, without provisions, without clothes and without arms.

Yet, even by this desperate situation the valiant captain was not dismayed; he resolved to continue by land towards the golden Veragua in the hope of meeting there his ships. Scarcely able to sustain their lives on roots and shellfish,

which were all they could find to eat, the shipwrecked unfortunates dragged themselves along the shores, exhausted from fatigue and hunger. The rivers they crossed in a small boat which had escaped the catastrophe, and which followed them along the coast, manned by four sailors. Four well-armed Indians would have been enough to destroy them all. They had the good fortune, however, not to be attacked, the Indians contenting themselves with the killing of a page with an arrow fired from a distance.

At last they arrived at a point ⁴ from whence they beheld a large bay, and, to shorten their march, resolved to cross in the boat to what they believed to be the opposite shore. The following morning they noticed that the boat had disappeared together with the sailors, and their consternation was changed to despair when on investigating they found that they were on an island, and, to crown their misfortunes, a barren island.

Such was the horrible awakening of these unfortunates who had dreamed so long of the golden Veragua. Naked, exposed to the violence of the elements, dying of hunger, they wandered along the beach in search of shellfish with which to prolong their suffering one day more. The fast-departing breath in their bodies served

⁴Chiriquí Point, or Cape Vallente.

them principally to heap maledictions on the heads of the traitors—Lope de Olano and the sailors.

Great was the joy of the survivors, at the end of a considerable period, when many more had been added to the list of their dead and the few remaining were in a moribund state, with all hope of succor lost, to discover a sail on the horizon. It was one of the barkentines of Lope de Olano and in it were found the four sailors who had deserted but who gave satisfactory explanation of their flight. Their leader stated that they had become convinced that after the hurricane Nicuesa had been marching in the direction opposite to that followed by the ships, and that, therefore, they had concluded to set out in search of them, and had found that they had actually reached the Belén River.

Thus, as has been seen, Diego de Nicuesa, in 1510, traveled on foot over a part of the old Atlantic coast of Costa Rica—that is to say, from the Chiriquí River to Cape Valiente. The island on which so much suffering was endured also belonged to our country, whether it was the Escudo de Veragua, as has been the belief down to the present, or the island called Cayo de Agua⁵ in the Chiriquí Lagoon, as is the belief of the author of this book.⁶

⁵ Water key.

⁶ This opinion we base upon the following reasons:

Briefly to review now the final misfortunes of the valient Nicuesa: after the passing of the

(a) In that part of the coast traveled over by Nicuesa, there is not more than one bay that merits the qualification of great—the Chiriquí Lagoon (Almirante Bay).

(b) Nicuesa, in order to see this bay, was forced to go as far as Cape Valiente.

(c) From that cape, looking towards the Chiriquí Lagoon, it is practically impossible for any one to take the Escudo Island for the other extremity of the mouth of the bay, for in such case said island, situated about forty kilometers distant, lies at the back of the spectator and is invisible by reason of the configuration of the coast.

(d) The island on which Nicuesa was stranded was found to be uninhabited, whereas it is set forth in a document of the year 1560 (Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 174) that on the Island of Escudo there were "two principal *caciques* (tribal chiefs) and many people."

(e) The historian Girolamo Benzoni, who visited these places in 1544, says that the island on which Nicuesa found himself was one of those in Almirante Bay. *Dell' Historie del Mondo Nuovo*, Book I, p. 45. Venice, 1572.

Furthermore, the position of Agua Key corresponds admirably with that of Nicuesa's island. This islet is situated some twelve kilometers distant from, and in front of, Chiriquí Point. Whoever looks at it from that spot could easily take it for the opposite extremity of the mouth of the bay, for the other islands are hidden from sight behind it. Its nearness to Cape Valiente explains very clearly the resolution taken by Nicuesa to go by boat, which required his going back and forth several times in order to transport all his people. The Padre Las Casas (Vol. III, pp. 332, 333) says: "One day they arrived in their peregrinations at the point of a cove or large bay made by the sea, and, to shorten their march, decided to pass, a few at a time, to the other point." Oviedo writes (Book XXVIII, chap 11): "* * * by which they were given a breathing spell and accumulated strength enough to pass over by boat, in three or four trips, to a small island." Now, this maneuver would have been impossible in connection with the Escudo Island, which was located, as has been said, at forty kilometers from Cape Valiente. In our judgment the error was born of the confusion, at that time, of the Escudo Island discovered by Columbus, in 1502, with the other on which Nicuesa found himself.

storm that had separated him from the caravel, Lope de Olano, without concerning himself with the possible fate of his chief, had returned to look for the ships. They were found at anchor in the Chagres River and in very bad condition. Believing that Nicuesa was dead, or perhaps pretending to think so, Olano thereupon assumed command of the expedition, causing the armada to be removed to the Belén River, where it was necessary to destroy the biggest ships, and on that site, the theater of the disaster to the Admiral's colony, founded a town; and here he was found by the four sailors of the small boat who went to seek his help.

When Nicuesa arrived at Belén in the barkentine, his first impulse was to punish Olano with the severity he deserved; but in the end his natural kindliness of heart prevailed and he granted him his life, only condemning him to be transported back to Spain for trial. Of the 700 men who had embarked with Nicuesa at Santo Domingo but 300 remained, and these were exhausted by hunger, sickness and fatigue. As a colony this new one of Belén had no better fate than that founded by Christopher Columbus, for the lack of food and the continual hostility of the Indians obliged Nicuesa at last to seek a more hospitable land. Acting on the advice of a Genoese sailor who had been to Portobelo with the

Admiral on his last voyage, he set out for that port in the two barkentines and a caravel, built during his absence by Lope de Olano, leaving a part of his people at Belén under the orders of Alonso Núñez. But the Indians would not let them disembark. He then repaired to the port Columbus had called Bastimentos, and he called Nombre de Dios, and there constructed a fort to resist the repeated attacks of the natives, who were bent on defending their liberty. They devastated the whole territory, and hunger, which had all along been the inseparable companion of Nicuesa, now made new and terrible exactions; the brilliant expedition was reduced to sixty men, veritable walking skeletons.

This was the condition of affairs when at Nombre de Dios a ship arrived bearing Rodrigo de Colmenares, whom Nicuesa had left in Santo Domingo with orders to follow him with provisions. Colmenares made port at the colony of Santa María del Antigua del Darién, founded by Ojeda's people within the territory of Nicuesa's government. Here he learned of the absence of that leader, who had sailed for Española in quest of help and had induced his men to agree to await his return fifty days, after which they were to be at liberty to abandon the country.

They told him also that the colony was much divided by the rivalries of the Bachelor of Arts,

Martín Fernández de Enciso, and Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who disputed the command. As a remedy for these evils, Colmenares proposed to the colonists that Nicuesa be sent for in order to re-establish peace, and this solution being accepted, he set forth in search of his chief. So enthusiastic was Nicuesa over this favorable change in his fortunes, that he forgot his ordinary prudence and went so far as to say that all who had abstracted gold from those lands that were within his government would be made to surrender it.

Give up their gold! Sooner would they have given up their hearts' blood. And so, when this menace became known to the colonists at Darién, they refused, on the advice of the ambitious Vasco Núñez de Balboa, to receive their chosen Governor and even entertained the thought of killing him. Sorrowfully the wretched Nicuesa besought them not to repulse him. Some were sympathetic; and Vasco Núñez himself interposed in his favor; but the gold was in danger, so all was in vain. Nothing remained for Nicuesa but to leave for Española. He embarked on the 1st of March, 1511, on an unseaworthy vessel, with a handful of faithful friends; the sea still guards the secret of his tragic end, for nothing more was ever known of this noble gentleman, so worthy of a better fate.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF CASTILLA DEL ORO—THE FAMOUS PEDRARIAS—VASCO NÚÑEZ DE BALBOA DISCOVERS THE PACIFIC OCEAN—HERNÁN PONCE DE LEÓN AND JUAN DE CASTAÑEDA VISIT THE GULF OF DULCE AND THE GULF OF NICOYA

1513-1519

THE histories narrate the prowess of Alonso de Ojeda, which indeed bordered on the fabulous; but it was not enough to overcome the misfortune that dogged his steps. His companions waited in vain for his return, and, while he was wandering about Cuba and Jamaica, they established, as has been said, a colony on the Isthmus of Panama under the leadership of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who ended by possessing himself of the command of Santa María del Antigua del Darién. Against him, his rival, Martín Fernández de Enciso, repaired to court and presented an avalanche of complaints. These were heard by Don Juan Rodríguez de Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, at that period omnipotent in the affairs of the Indies and, as it happened, the declared enemy of all those bold adventurers who scorned to receive at his hands a

blessing before launching forth upon their perilous adventures, yet who, be it said, were beyond doubt the workmen who contributed most to the upbuilding of Spanish power in America.

The misfortunes of Nicuesa and Ojeda, and, even more, the news of the enormous riches of Tierra Firme (where, it was reported, gold was fished for with nets), brought about a decision of the Crown to send, at its own expense, a powerful expedition to subjugate completely the newly discovered lands. Just as the necessary preparations were being made, the indefatigable Vasco Núñez de Balboa covered himself with glory by discovering the Pacific Ocean, on the 25th of September, 1513. It is permissible to suppose that if the knowledge of this new and stupendous achievement had arrived in Spain before then, matters would have taken a different turn; but it was written that Vasco Núñez also was to suffer adversity.

To insure the success of the projected expedition, it was determined to confide it to a man of great prestige. From among the various candidates contending for the honor of command, the Catholic King, at the instance of the Bishop of Burgos, chose an *hidalgo* (nobleman) of Segovia, a brother of the first Count of Puñonrostro, who from childhood had been attached to the service of the royal house. His name was Pedro Arias

de Avila, or Pedrarias Dávila, as it was the custom of his contemporaries to call him. Already sixty years old, he was a man of great energy and experience, who had warred in Africa against the Moors, and, with the rank of Colonel, had assisted at the siege and surrender of Grenada. A great courtier, most magnificent in his dress¹ and brilliant in the lists, by these tokens he was known as "The Gallant" and "The Jousting." His marriage with Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, who was niece of the Condesa de Moya, the great friend of Isabella the Catholic, placed at his disposal powerful influences at court.

The King, in getting the enterprise ready, expended a very considerable sum of money for those days.² He had meditated, at the proper time, sending an army to Naples against the French, under the command of the Gran Capitán (Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba), and with this in view many youths of the flower of the Spanish nobility had enlisted under the prestige of his banner; and as, at the last hour, Don Fernando changed his plans, there remained in Seville about ten thousand volunteers; many elected to serve under the banner of Pedrarias

¹ The people of Costa Rica still describe a certain airy grace in wearing the hat as "*á la pedrada*;" in olden times they must have said "*á la Pedrarias*."

² Fifty thousand ducats.

and were received with great gladness, though not all who assembled in that city to come to the new world found billets in the fleet.

On the 27th of July, 1513, Pedrarias was appointed Governor and Captain-General of Castilla del Oro (Golden Castile)—a name significant of the hopes that were based on the supposed riches of Darién, which until then had been called Tierra Firme (the Continent). As Veragua was not included in the government of Castilla del Oro, its territory must have commenced to the east of the port of Retrete and extended in the same direction, because the former continued to be the subject of litigation with the Admiral Don Diego Columbus. Pedrarias left Sanlúcar on the 12th of April, 1514, taking with him fifteen ships, 1,500 men—all *hidalgos* of high lineage—and a bishop, appointed over Tierra Firme.

Several contretemps occurred at sea. Pedrarias touched at Gomera and later at Santa Marta, where he put ashore a body of men to sack the Indian villages; but these were bravely defended and much damage was done by the poisoned arrows of the Indians. From thence he proceeded to Fuerte Island and eventually reached Darién on the 30th of June. Instantly he sent notice of his arrival to Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who was at the colony of Santa María

and most assuredly not expecting a visit so inopportune. Vasco Núñez, nevertheless, knowing how to dissimulate his displeasure, received his successor with good grace, notwithstanding the fact that with the four hundred and fifty acclimated veterans under his command he could have resisted him to advantage.

The first move Pedrarias made was to order the Licentiate (lawyer) Espinosa, his *Alcalde mayor*, to call Vasco Núñez de Balboa to account for his administration of affairs, and afterwards condemned him to pay some thousands of dollars for the injuries inflicted upon Martín Fernández de Enciso and others. Vasco Núñez, who possessed funds, paid the fine levied upon him and considered himself well out of the difficulty. Then began the despatching of expeditions in every direction, and the robbing and murdering of the Indians without pity. By the lieutenants of Pedrarias, who fully merits the appellation of *Furor Domini* applied to him by the Padre Las Casas, the conquest was made with fire and sword. Yet the unhappy Indians did not allow themselves to be annihilated without resistance. The rout of Gonzalo de Badajoz at Paris, of Captain Vallejo on the Redes River, and of Alonso Becerra, who was defeated and slain at Cariguana with his one hundred and eighty men, demonstrate the valor with which

they defended their liberty. And even more effective than the prowess of the Indians, was the famine that intervened to punish the cruelty and rapacity of the conquerors. The provisions brought from Spain soon gave out and the devastated country yielded nothing in their place. Wandering about the streets of Darién were seen noble *caballeros* dressed in silks and brocades, imploring the charity of a piece of bread, and, as there was none who could give it them, many died miserably.

Soon there arrived a piece of news that caused much excitement in the colony. The emissaries sent by Vasco Núñez de Balboa to Spain to herald his splendid discovery of the Pacific had arrived at court bearing a present of pearls for the King and overflowing with marvelous stories respecting the riches of the newly discovered countries. From this period Vasco Núñez had laid aside his rôle of tyrant and usurper and transformed himself into a hero worthy of reward, an assumption the King gratified by conferring upon him the title of *Adelantado* of Coyba and Panama. Jealous, and feeling nothing but hatred for him, Pedrarias received with bad grace the news of the honors bestowed on Balboa. But, aided in this by Doña Isabel de Bobadilla, whose good will Vasco Núñez had been fortunate enough to attain, Fray Juan de Quevedo inter-

vened to bring about a reconciliation. Pedrarias entered, or pretended to enter, into the designs of his wife and the Bishop, and consented to make peace with his rival, even to seal the peace by family alliance, agreeing that the discoverer of the Pacific should be given the hand of Doña María de Peñalosa, one of the Governor's two daughters who had remained in Spain. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Bishop, and Vasco Núñez de Balboa, thus converted into a son-in-law of Pedrarias, departed for the Pearl Islands to build ships for a voyage of discovery in the Southern Sea (the Pacific Ocean).

Meanwhile the Emperor Charles V. had arrived in Spain, and having heard of the numerous complaints presented against Pedrarias by the historian Fernández de Oviedo and several others, decided to replace him by a Cordovese gentleman named Lope de Sosa. At length rumor of the impending change reached Darién and came to the ear of Vasco Núñez, when it appears that he told some of his intimates that they had better set forth on their discoveries because later, perhaps, it might not be possible. By a distorted version of this advice that was carried to Pedrarias he was given to understand that Balboa intended to rise in revolt, and thereupon, wishing to profit by the opportunity to

gratify the hatred against his son-in-law that lay dormant in his perverse soul, he wrote Balboa preferring charges and summoning him into his presence.

At the moment Vasco Núñez had under his command four ships all fitted out and three hundred men, and could very well have weighed anchor and removed himself from Pedrarias' wrath; but, being innocent, obeyed the orders of him who called him son, believing that by the truth of his words he could dissipate the calumnies directed against him. Somewhat shaken was this confidence, however, when he found himself the prisoner of his friend Francisco Pizarro—the future conqueror of Peru. The bloody-minded Pedrarias had him brought to trial before his favorite, Espinosa, who resurrected against him a multitude of long-forgotten charges, among which was that resulting from the death of Diego de Nicuesa, and, in spite of his reiterated protest of innocence, Vasco Núñez de Balboa was in the end condemned to be beheaded. The unjust and cruel sentence was executed at Acla in January, 1519; ⁸ here he and four of his followers

⁸ Washington Irving ("The Companions of Columbus," chap. XXIX) gives 1517 as the year in which Vasco Núñez de Balboa was beheaded. This affirmation is contradicted by historical documents, as for example the order for the trial of Balboa, signed by Pedrarias at Acla on the 12th of January, 1519. See *Documentos inéditos del Archivo de Indias*, Vol. 87, p. 315.



THE EMPEROR CHARLES V.

Painting by Titian, in Museum of the Prado, Madrid.

were butchered like sheep. While this crime was being perpetrated Pedrarias, hidden in a hut a dozen paces from the place of execution and peering between the cane stalks that served for walls, looked on at the spectacle that filled with happiness his heart—the heart of a wild beast.

During 1516 and 1517 the lieutenants of Pedrarias explored the Pacific slopes towards the west, and Bartolomé Hurtado, sent out by Espinosa in two canoes, reached a point sixty leagues west of Natá. The expedition was fruitful and incited in the adventurers a desire to go farther, only there was a dearth of ships for their purpose, and this lack was probably one of the reasons that induced the murder of Balboa. With the death of the discoverer of the Pacific, the difficulty disappeared. Pedrarias arranged that Espinosa himself should continue his explorations, making use of the bark *San Cristóbal* and the lateen-rigged vessel *Santa María de Buena Esperanza*, built by the ill-fated Balboa.

Panama was founded on the 15th of August, 1519. Shortly afterwards Espinosa set sail with one hundred and fifteen men, in the two ships mentioned and in two large canoes, carrying with him as chief pilot Juan de Castañeda, a navigator of great reputation. Because of bad weather, it was necessary to put in at Burica, and, as the boats were crowded with Spaniards

and Indians, he decided to remain there with a part of the company while Juan de Castañeda and Hernán Ponce de León, with forty men, continued the expedition by sea.

From Burica the ships passed into the Gulf of Osa, now called Dulce, and into the domain of the Cuchiras,⁴ but Hernán Ponce de León, deterred by the fierce attitude of the Indians, did not attempt to disembark. Pushing onward, therefore, the discoverers came to a halt at a small bay, which they called the Gulf of San Vicente,⁵ situated within another, much larger and dotted with islands.⁶ Here the natives showed no better disposition. Many of the warriors entered their canoes and paddled around the ships in a threatening attitude; many more appeared on the beach blowing war-horns and making menacing gestures. Two cannon shots, however, put them all to flight. Nevertheless, Castañeda and Ponce de León decided to go back, after having seized three or four Indians for use as interpreters and guides later on. It was their intention to rejoin Espinosa, who, during this exploration, had founded the town of Natá.

⁴Quepo.

⁵The ancient port of Caldera. León Fernández—*Documentos para la Historia de Costa Rica*, Vol. I, p. 95.

⁶The Gulf of Nicoya, also called San Lúcar, Güetares and Orotina.

Thus were discovered, in 1519, the Gulfs of Dulce and Nicoya by Juan de Castañeda and Hernán Ponce de León, the lieutenants of Pedrarias Dávila.

CHAPTER V

EXPEDITION OF GIL GONZÁLEZ DÁVILA TO THE PACIFIC COAST AND TO THE NICOYA PENINSULA

1519-1528

WITH the discovery of the Pacific Ocean, or "The Southern Sea," the gaze of the adventurous Spaniards converged upon this new field opened up to their daring and restless ambition. Many in Darién, aware of the arrest of Vasco Núñez de Balboa, were convinced that he would not get out of the clutches of Pedrarias alive, and prepared, therefore, to appropriate his heritage to themselves. To this end, Andrés Niño, a pilot of great renown, left the continent for Spain, taking with him moneys belonging to himself and others, for the purpose of petitioning for a license to engage in discoveries on the Pacific.

The Crown, of course desirous of increasing its rich dominions beyond the seas, was accustomed to welcome with a good will those who, at the risk of their lives and property, went forth to discovery and conquest; but, as the candidates were many in number, it followed that

those chosen must needs be few; so in this, as in all human affairs, favor and privilege prevailed. Consequently Andrés Niño well understood that by himself he could accomplish nothing, and that it would be necessary for him to interest in his project a person of influence and weight. And it so happened that there was at court at that time a *caballero* from Avila, by the name of Gil González, who was Auditor of the Island of Española, and closely attached to the house of the Bishop of Burgos, and was one of his protégés. With him the pilot established an understanding, and, through his mediation, easily obtained what he desired.

On the 18th of June, 1519, he signed a contract with the King, by the terms of which he was to proceed on a voyage of discovery for a thousand leagues westward along the coasts of the Pacific. Gil González de Avila was named Captain-General of the armada and contributed to the enterprise 854,941 *maravedís*; Andrés Niño, 1,058,078; Cristóbal de Haro, 551,814; while the Crown contributed, on its part, 1,800,000,¹ and on the morning of the 18th of September of the same year, the expedition set sail from Sanlúcar. Comprised in it were three ships, well provisioned and manned by 150 men, among

¹ The *maravedí* is equivalent to only one-third of a cent, but account must be taken of the greater purchasing power of money at that time.

them carpenters, wood-sawyers and calkers, to meet the possible necessity of building ships on the Southern Sea; also all the iron, tackle, rigging, cordage and oakum that might be needed for this purpose. At Española González Dávila remained for some time, in order to purchase various supplies in which they were yet deficient, among other things thirty-five mares, two carts and a yoke of oxen for transporting the cargo across the Isthmus. During the first days of January, 1520, he set sail, and twelve days later arrived at the port of Acla, founded by Pedrarias. On the voyage, as a result of a storm, he had to throw overboard fifteen of the mares that he had bought in Española.

At Acla, believing that the government was already in the hands of Lope de Sosa, González Dávila neglected to take Pedrarias into consideration, and began at once to discharge his vessel. His surprise may well be imagined when he found that the new governor had not arrived. To correct the error, he hastened to write to Pedrarias, excusing himself for not having gone to Darién directly, and explaining that it was much easier to transport the cargo from the port of Acla, which at that period was the narrowest known pass between the two oceans. The Governor answered with much warmth, expressing his indignation at the effrontery in landing so

many men without having previously asked his leave, and then, alarmed at the sinister aspect the affair had assumed, González Dávila ordered Andrés Niño to proceed at once to Darién with the decrees in which Pedrarias was ordered by the King to lend aid and turn over the ships built by Vasco Núñez de Balboa. The terrible old Governor was not a man to be daunted by such a small matter as this; he merely replied that the ships had not been the property of Vasco Núñez but belonged, to some three hundred Spaniards who had helped him to build them, and that consequently he could not deliver them. Andrés Niño insisted, threatening damages and punishment, but with no better result, and he was obliged at last to return to the port of Acla, much crestfallen. To crown their misfortune, Lope de Sosa who arrived in May, 1520, died on board his ship at Darién.

Filled with vexation at this melancholy turn of fate, González Dávila found it necessary to decide upon a step cruelly repugnant to his dignity. He went in person to see Pedrarias, and himself demanded the ships on the authority of the positive order of the King. The humiliation was in vain; the Governor treated him as he had treated Andrés Niño. Under the circumstances, having to struggle with a tyrant like Pedrarias, a man of less mettle would have con-

fessed himself beaten. But Dávila's energy was indomitable; he resolved upon a course that many described as insane: the construction of new ships on the Pacific—"a work which," says the Padre Las Casas, "the King would not dare to undertake with his greater facilities in men, skill and means." Nevertheless there were not lacking those who believed it possible, among them the Treasurer, Alonso de la Puente, and the Auditor, Diego Márquez, who gave González Dávila financial assistance.

The place chosen for the work of construction was the Balsas River, which emptied into the Gulf of San Miguel. Here, by dint of great labor, the timber was felled and sawed, and it became necessary to open up a road fourteen leagues in length, through the forests and over mountains, from Acla to the improvised shipyard. This done, the transporting of the cargo was commenced by means of the moribund beasts of burden that had survived the passage by sea. The difficulties that Dávila had to overcome in carrying out his enterprise were in truth epic. The path was sown with corpses of men and animals; the climate, hunger, and the terrible ruggedness of the country constituted obstacles that could have been surmounted only by such admirable constancy and iron will as that possessed by the Captain. In due course he had to grap-

ple with the open hostility of Pedrarias, who sought in every way to prevent the realization of his projects, and, becoming at length convinced that this obstruction, too, would have to be removed from his path, cast about for some means of pacifying his enemy. With this object in view, and knowing that avarice was not the least of Pedrarias' defects, he purchased from him a negro acrobat for three hundred pesos (Spanish dollars), a price that he knew to be exorbitant, and by that good stroke of policy caused him to relax in a measure his persecution and even to agree to furnish some Indian slaves to aid in the transportation of the cargo.

At last the day arrived on which the four barks lay completed on the Balsas River. Of the one hundred and fifty men who came with the armada from Spain, many had already perished, victims of the unhealthful climate and their extraordinary labors, and, when the ships were towed out towards the sea, those who survived could scarcely credit the marvel achieved by their hands and they hugged themselves in the illusion that the end of their weary labors had arrived. A cruel destiny, however, yet had in store for them many days of trial. On the arrival of the vessels at the Pearl Islands, defects in their construction resulted in their total loss. How profound must have been the grief of those valiant wrestlers with

fortune in the face of such a great calamity! For naught had been the sacrifice of life, for naught the almost superhuman labors, the constancy and energy! It is in just such a momentous crisis as this that the greatness of González' soul is most to be admired. Without losing heart for a moment, he only returned to the task with renewed vigor. Attacking the great undertaking a second time, he succeeded in constructing on the islands four more ships, and with these, after having struggled two years without rest, he set sail on the 21st of January, 1522. Before his departure, he went to Panama to ask of Pedrarias a detail of men, for the number of those that remained of his command was pitifully few. The Governor got rid of him by evasions and not one did he grant.

Without mishap, González Dávila then navigated a hundred leagues to the west, yet still adversity was ever at his heels. The sailors soon found that all the water casks were useless and that the ships had been badly damaged by the ravages of barnacles. Under these conditions they had no recourse but to steer for shore, and this they proceeded to do. The armada came to a halt on the Chiriquí coast. The cargo was taken out in order to make repairs on the ships, and, while the new water casks were being made, the one that was in the best condition was sent to

Panama to procure the pitch that they lacked. But, as the provisions were becoming scarcer, González decided to have Andrés Niño remain on the spot to await the pitch whilst he himself, with a part of the command, continued by land. It was resolved further that, as soon as the ships should be ready, they should continue to navigate westward along the coast and await his arrival in the best port they could find.

The Captain-General undertook the journey with one hundred men, at times penetrating into the interior for more than ten leagues from the coast. On his way he baptized many Indians and gathered an abundant harvest of gold. In the narrative left by his Treasurer, Andrés de Cereceda, the itinerary of this extraordinary march² is set forth. He stopped at Burica and at the Gulf of Dulce and had passed through the territories of the *caciques* Boto, Coto,³ Guaicara and Durucaca,⁴ when, as a result of wading through many rivers while in a state of profuse perspiration, he was overcome by an acute attack of rheumatism that made his further progress on foot impossible. González thereafter had himself carried in a hammock and thus continued his

¹ León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, pp. 82-87.

² Toward the mountains to the north of Burica Point. *Ibid.*

³ Durucaca, or Turucaca, on the plains (*llanos*) of Térraba and Boruca. *Ibid.*

march until the heavy rains and the intensity of his sufferings forced him to take refuge in a house of a leading *cacique*, who lived on an island of the Río Grande de Térraba.

The dwelling of this *cacique* was very spacious and high, built on piles and in the form of a tent. The roof was thatched with *bijagua* leaves. In the center a room was constructed for the invalid; the soldiers accommodated themselves in the houses in the village. They stayed here fifteen days, and then as a further result of the great rains, the river overflowed its bed, submerging the whole of the flat plain. So great was the inundation that in the house of the *cacique* the water rose to the height of men's chests. Fearful of drowning, the soldiers asked González Dávila for permission to seek safety in the tree-tops, but the Captain, who could not move, was left with a few faithful followers confined to his room. The floods increased. One night—at midnight—the *cacique's* house suddenly collapsed, and demolished the interior room. All within would have perished had it not been that by great good fortune a lamp standing before the image of the Virgin had remained alight, and, guided by its rays, they were enabled with an ax to chop their way out of the ruins through the roof. González Dávila, found supporting himself on his crutches among the débris of the



A WARRIOR OF NICOYA.

room, was carried from the wreck on the shoulders of his companions, and, with the aid of those who had sought refuge in the trees and who had arrived on the scene in response to the cries for help, was placed in a hammock, swung between two trees. In this position he remained for two days under a torrential downpour of rain.

When the flood had subsided, the Captain ordered the construction of huts in the trees, for fear of a recurrence of the catastrophe. This proved to be a wise precaution, for twice after this they had to seek refuge in them. In the disaster the provisions were lost and many articles of clothing and arms. It became necessary, later, to make shields of padded cotton to replace the bucklers that had disappeared. For these reasons González concluded to return to the coast, which he was unable to reach by land because of the extremely bad condition of the soil after the inundation, and therefore caused *balsas*⁵ to be built, in which he embarked with his command and the Indians in his service, making in all a company of some five hundred persons. Several of the *balsas* reached the sea, but at night, and were carried out by the current to a distance

⁵A light craft of the catamaran type, common among the Indians of the west coast of Central and South America, constructed sometimes of woven grass, sometimes of bamboo logs bound together, but usually of the logs of the *balsa* tree, from which it derives its name, and the wood of which has a cork-like fiber. *Translator.*

of some two leagues from shore. The Captain contrived to save them by despatching good swimmers in some of the other *balsas* that were smaller. With their help the missing ones were brought back to land, just as the crews had given themselves up for lost.

Proceeding on his march, always towards the west, González passed through the villages of the *caciques* Carobareque,⁶ Cochira,⁷ Cob,⁸ Huetare⁹ and Chorotega, who lived on the borders of the Gulf of San Vicente, or Bay of Caldera. Here he found the ships of Andrés Niño, which had just cast anchor. Because of his extreme ill health, he then resolved to continue by water and assigned to a lieutenant the command of the expedition by land, but when, on learning of this intention, the soldiers evinced a gloomy reluctance, he changed his plans and remained with them, and Andrés Niño resumed the voyage with the two ships. The other two remained at San Vicente with the forty thousand *castellanos*' worth of gold that were already in González' possession. González, with the same hundred men and four horses that he had taken from the armada, then continued by land, passing through

⁶ Punta Mala.

⁷ Towards the river Naranjo, where the village of Quepo was located. *Ibid.*

⁸ Tusubres. *Ibid.*

⁹ Tabarcia.

the province of Orotina,¹⁰ from whence he covered twelve leagues around the Gulf, through the villages of Avancari,¹¹ and Cotorí.¹² From thence he returned to Orotina and continued on to Chome,¹³ Pocosí,¹⁴ and Cangén,¹⁵ and at last arrived at Nicoya, the *cacique* of which made him a present of gold to the value of 14,000 *castellanos*. Here he baptized the *cacique*, his wives, and more than 6,000 of his subjects.

At this place González Dávila remained ten days, regaled with many festivities, and at the hour of his departure was presented by the *cacique* with six golden idols, a hand and more in height, which the *cacique* told him to take away since he now no longer believed in idols. He further requested that some person be left behind to instruct him in the tenets of the Catholic religion, but this the Captain did not dare to do.

From Nicoya he went to Sabandí¹⁶ and after-

¹⁰ Orotina occupied the coast between the Aranjuez and Chomes (Guasimal) rivers. *Ibid.*

¹¹ Avancari is the Abangares of to-day.

¹² Cotorí is somewhere between the Abangares and Chomes (Guasimal) rivers. *Ibid.*

¹³ The Chomes Indians occupied the sources of the Chomes River. *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Probably to the north of Pan de Azúcar (Sugarloaf Mountain) on the Nicoya Peninsula. *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Near Lepanto. *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Sabandí, Sapanci or Cipanci is the native name for the Tempisque River. *Ibid.* This village was situated at the upper waters, three leagues from the mouth of the river.

wards to Corobicí,¹⁷ and six leagues from this village came upon the gold washings of Chira;¹⁸ from these in three hours they extracted with a trough gold of a low grade valued at ten *pesos* and four *tomines*.¹⁹ Thence he returned to Corobicí, later went to Diríá²⁰ and afterwards to Namiapí,²¹ and from that village passed into Orosí and thence to Papagayo.²² At this last village he heard of a very powerful *cacique*, called Nicaragua, who lived on the strip of land embraced between the ocean and the Lake of Granada, which now forms the Department of Rivas.

Whereupon González Dávila determined to visit this territory of Nicaragua's. Many leaders among the Indians who accompanied him tried to dissuade him from the enterprise, which in their judgment was most dangerous, and even some of his own men protested, but the forceful Captain would not listen to their counsels of pru-

¹⁷ A village situated on an affluent of the Piedras River which still preserves that name.

¹⁸ This place must not be confounded with the island of Chira.

¹⁹ A *peso*, or dollar, is a Spanish coin weighing one ounce; a *tomín* is a third of a drachm, Spanish measure, representing a *real* in Spanish America.

²⁰ The *Cacique* Diríá probably occupied the territory between Belén and Bolsón, and it is to be noted that the affluent of the Tempisque, which passes through there, still preserves the name of Diríá. *Ibid.*

²¹ Probably on the coast of Culebra Bay.

²² On the coast between Salinas Bay and San Juan del Sur.



IDOL OF GREEN STONE.

**Hung from the neck of Indians as an ornament. In National Museum of Costa Rica.
(Photo, Gómez.)**

dence. "I go with the determination not to turn back," he wrote the King, "until some one appears who by force of arms shall prevent my going forward."²³ One day, before arriving at the village, he despatched in the capacity of heralds six of the principal Indians among those he took with him, together with several interpreters, to announce to Nicaragua what it had been his custom to say to the other *caciques*: that he, Gil González Dávila, was "a captain whom the great King of the Christians sent to those parts to tell all princes and lords therein that they should know that in Heaven, higher even than the sun, there dwells a Lord who made all things and all men, and that all those who believed this and acknowledged him as their Lord, and who are, therefore, Christians, will arise and go up to him when they die, and that those who are not Christians will descend into the fire under the earth."²⁵ He commanded the heralds to say also that the same tidings had been brought to the *caciques* he had left behind in his march and that all had adopted this belief and become Christians and vassals of the great King of Castile; that he pro-

²³ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 10.

²⁴ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 10.

²⁵ González took with him on this expedition, to serve as interpreters, the Indians seized in 1519 at the Gulf of Nicoya by Juan de Castañeda and Hernán Ponce de León.

posed to do as much for all the *caciques* who lived in the west; that they need have no fears; that they should continue to reside in their villages with their subjects, where he would come to them and tell them other great things concerning his God, but that if they were not disposed to give ear, and to become vassals of his King, then they must meet him on the field of battle.

On the afternoon of the day on which the emissaries took their departure, an unfortunate accident occurred; three of the musketeers were severely burned by the explosion of some powder they had been testing and it became necessary to leave them where they were, in the care of one man. This untoward event, happening on the eve of the battle they feared, disheartened the soldiers, who were already much concerned over the accounts given by the Indians of the great power of Nicaragua. The Captain, however, harangued them and succeeded in restoring their courage by his reassuring words.

At a distance of a league from the famous village, González Dávila came upon four head men, who told him that their chief awaited him in peace. On learning this good news, he resumed his march and was well received by Nicaragua, who made him a present of gold

amounting to 15,000 *castellanos*. In his turn the Captain presented the *cacique* with a costume of silk, a red cap and some gewgaws from Castile.

The village of Nicaragua was situated on the border of a great lake, which the natives called Cozabolca, and it was with admiring eyes that the Spaniards looked upon this fresh-water sea (*un mar de agua dulce*).²⁶ They were told by the Indians that it had no communication with the ocean, but the pilots assured their captain that it must empty into the Atlantic and in this they were not mistaken. González Dávila took possession of it in the name of the King of Spain, plunging into the waters on horseback, sword in hand.

Two days after his arrival at Nicaragua's village, he baptized the *cacique*, with all his wives and subjects—9,000 souls and more. The historian Gomara²⁷ relates that the *cacique* Nicaragua, a man of subtlety and caution, asked the Spaniards a number of questions before accepting the waters of baptism. Among them were several they had difficulty in answering. He asked whether the Christians had been warned of the deluge and whether there had ever been another flood, whether some day the earth would

²⁶ *Mar Dulce*.

²⁷ Francisco López de Gomara—*Historia General de las Indias*.

be overthrown and the heavens fall, when and how the sun, moon and stars would lose their brightness and stop in their courses, how large they were, who moved them and held them up, what was the cause of the darkness at night and what produced cold, adding that it would be better to have light and heat always. He asked also what honors should be paid to the threefold God of the Christians, who made the heavens and the sun he worshiped, the sea, the land and man who had dominion over the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea and over everything else in the world. He asked where the soul was located and what it did when once free from the body, whether the Pope of Rome, Vicar of Jesus Christ, the God of the Christians, was mortal, and how Christ could be God and man at the same time and his Mother a virgin, whether the Emperor and King of Castile was mortal and why such a small number of men wanted the great quantity of gold they were in search of.

At the end of a week González Dávila moved on into the province of Nochari, situated six leagues ahead of him, where he found six villages, each with a population of some 2,000. Their *caciques* gave him gold valued at 33,484 *castellanos*, besides slaves and provisions. In

return the chaplain of the expedition, Don Diego de Agüero, gave baptism to all.

Here also many neighboring *caciques* came to call on the Captain. Among them was one called Diriagen, who made a most sensational entry at the head of 500 Indians, each carrying one or two turkeys. Behind them marched ten men with banners; following these came seventeen women covered from head to foot with golden disks; then the *cacique* with his courtiers and five trumpeters. In addition to their other weapons they carried 200 axes, made of gold of a low grade, which, together with the disks, represented a value in excess of 18,000 *castellanos*. Coming to a halt before the house where González Dávila was being entertained, after a brief fanfare of trumpets, Diriagen entered, accompanied by his nobles and followed by the women and bearers with the gold. When the Captain caused them to be questioned as to the purpose of their visit, they answered that they had come to see these foreigners that wore beards and mounted strange animals. Through the medium of interpreters, González Dávila addressed them in his customary form on the subject of God and the King of Castile, but their reply when asked whether they wished to be baptized, was that they would return within three days.

What the astute Diriagen had really sought

was merely to ascertain the numerical strength of the foreigners, and, having found it to be so small, determined to exterminate them. Thus it was that on Saturday, April 17th, the day appointed for his baptism, he fell upon the Spaniards, without warning, at the head of three or four thousand warriors and would surely have carried out his purpose had not an Indian of the village given the alarm when the attacking army was already within bow shot. González Dávila, hurriedly mounting one of the remaining horses—the best of them had been taken by the chaplain on a proselyting tour—ordered his men into the open square, where for a considerable time heavy fighting took place and the victory hung in the balance, though at length the Indians gave way, and, pursued by the Spaniards, abandoned the village. In his ardor the Captain advanced so far that he almost became a victim of his fearlessness.

In spite of the victory gained, the soldiers who had come so far against their will began to murmur against his foolhardiness and made it plain to him that, being such a small company—barely sixty able-bodied men—they did not care to proceed farther. Obligated to yield, González Dávila ordered a retreat. Nicaragua thereupon sought to improve the opportunity by attacking the Spaniards in his turn and recovering the

gold. The expedition passed through his village in good order at 11 o'clock in the morning; but, when the soldiers had gotten outside, many Indians approached and urged those who were carrying the impedimenta to throw down their burdens and fly. At first, to prevent the breaking out of further hostilities, the Captain bore this with patience; finally, he was compelled to order the cross-bowmen to fire and some of the Indians were wounded. Immediately a multitude of warriors rushed out of the village with deafening war cries. González ordered Andrés de Cereceda to go forward with all haste with the impedimenta while he formed a rear guard with the other three horses, ten cross-bowmen and four peons armed with muskets. The battle lasted until sunset, the Spaniards fighting continuously as they retired. At last, when the Indians saw the ineffectiveness of their attacks, they asked for peace and to this the Captain gladly consented. Nicaragua sought to justify the aggression by casting the blame on a *cacique* called Coatega.

In this long engagement González Dávila did not lose a single man; the only wounds received were those suffered by his horse. Many of the Indian porters had taken flight, however, causing the loss of a large number of personal effects, but the gold was saved intact. At midnight the expe-

dition assembled on a hill, and, taking advantage of the moon, continued the retreat. Then, traveling night and day almost without rest, González pushed on until he arrived at the Gulf of San Vicente, where he found Andrés Niño awaiting him, the latter, on his return from his exploring tour, having come to anchor there the



week before. During this tour, he had discovered the Bay of Fonseca, in Honduras, called by the Indians Chorotega, and the Gulf of Tehuantepec, which marked the termination of his voyage.

It being necessary, because of the bad condition of the biggest of the ships, to leave it at San Vicente, the discoverers set sail in the other three and in Indian canoes for Panama, where they arrived on the 25th of June, 1523. Though

the greater part was of low standard, when the gold presented to them by the *caciques* of Costa Rica and Nicaragua was melted down, it was found to be worth 112,524 *castellanos*.²⁸ After the royal fifth had been segregated, González sent Alonso de la Puente to Pedrarias to ask for munitions of war to enable him to return and punish the treachery of the Nicaraguan *caciques*. The Governor answered that he was disposed to grant González' request provided he made it in the capacity of his lieutenant and in his name—"the which I had small desire to do," writes González to the King, "because it appeared to me that I, being the Captain of Your Majesty, in whose name the request was made, it would have been beneath my dignity to accept the conditions, to say nothing of the difference existing between his lineage and my own." This high-spirited Captain must have been noble indeed to treat with such disdain the lineage of Pedrarias, who claimed descent from the famous Count Arias Gonzalo,²⁹ but it must be said also that the Arias Dávila family of that period was reputed to be of Jewish extraction.

So immense a quantity of gold, the fruit of an expedition in which more than 32,000 souls

²⁸ It is very difficult to fix the exact value of this amount. It may, however, be estimated at \$600,000.

²⁹ Don Angel del Arco y Molinero—*Glorias de la Nobleza Española*, p. 284. Tarragona, 1899.

had been baptized, awakened the avarice of the Governor, if, indeed, it had ever been asleep. Casting about for a means of possessing himself of the treasure, he began to hamper González' expedition by every means in his power. González bought a caravel in Nombre de Dios, and, as soon as Pedrarias knew of this, he notified him, through the medium of his officers, that the King's fifth must not be placed in a single vessel—on the pretext that it would be subject to the risk of loss. González replied that it would run a greater risk if it remained in the Governor's hands, and, without further argument, set forth by stealth for Nombre de Dios. With all speed, when he heard of this, Pedrarias hurried after him—or, more correctly speaking, after the money—but the Captain, having had two hours' notice of his impending arrival, sailed away with the treasure.

Gil González Dávila merits a prominent place in the gallery of great Spanish adventurers. His building of the ships, his march of 224 leagues through numerous warlike tribes with but a handful of men, and his struggle against the forces of nature seem more like fiction than human achievements. His name, however, does not shine in history as it is entitled to do—possibly because it is not associated with those great crimes that have brought such fame to others,

for, though a great hunter of gold, he was humane withal, and knew how to arrive at his ends without imposing too burdensome exactions or wantonly committing cruelties.

CHAPTER VI

FOUNDING OF THE TOWN OF BRUSELAS, IN OROTINA—ITS VICISSITUDES—THE EXPEDITION OF ANDRÉS GARABITO—MARTÍN ESTETE'S ENTRY INTO SUEBBE

1524-1529

FROM the time Pedrarias saw González return with the treasure and heard the news of the rich countries he had explored, a project had been formulating in his mind to seize them for his own, this is on the theory of priority in discovery, based on the expedition of Gaspar de Espinosa in 1519. Nor did he scruple to communicate his intention to González himself, and added that certain vessels he had in readiness for an expedition towards the east, it was his purpose now to send to the west. Against this the successful Captain protested, stating that those peoples had already been Christianized; but such an argument could have little weight with Pedrarias, who destroyed Christians and infidels alike when it was to his interest so to do.

González Dávila's flight added to Pedrarias' determination to dispossess him the desire for vengeance. By his orders, Captain Herrera went to Española in search of soldiers and



DON HERNANDO CORTÉS.

From a painting in the Royal Academy of San Fernando, Madrid.

horses for an expedition to be directed against Nicaragua; and, fearful lest González should again overreach him, the Governor for a while delayed, and then, with money lent by the prebendary Don Fernando de Luque, Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro, armed a small squadron and placed in command Francisco Fernández de Córdova. Among those who took part in this expedition were also the captains Gabriel de Rojas, Sosa, Francisco Campañón, Andrés Garabito, Benito Hurtado and Hernando de Soto, the same who was afterwards to become one of the conquerors of Peru, and later Governor of Cuba, *Adelantado* of Florida and the discoverer of the Mississippi.

In the region of Orotina, near the present port of Puntarenas, Fernández de Córdova, in the very beginning of 1524, founded the town of Bruselas and parceled out among its inhabitants the Guetare Indians and those in Nicoya and Chira. Captain Ruy Díaz was charged with the government of the town and Andrés Garabito remained there as his lieutenant. Fernández de Córdova then continued towards Nicaragua, and, in the same year of 1524, founded the cities of León and Granada.

For his part, González Dávila had not been content to sleep on his laurels. From Española he despatched the Treasurer Andrés de Cere-

ceda to court, with the gold representing the royal fifth and an extensive account of his discoveries; meanwhile he prepared a new expedition to Nicaragua—this time, however, by way of Honduras, his purpose being as much to avoid falling again into the clutches of Pedrarias as to search for the outlet of the Dulce Sea, or Lake of Nicaragua, and the Dudoso Strait (Doubtful Strait)—so called because it was supposed that there existed a communication between the two oceans at about the latitude where Honduras and Nicaragua lay.

Cereceda, who was well received in Spain, secured the authority asked for by his chief to carry forward the undertakings he had commenced. As soon as he had returned to Española, González Dávila set sail in a small squadron, with 800 men and 50 horses, and arrived safely at the coast of Honduras, from whence he proceeded to Dulce Gulf, in Guatemala, and in 1524 founded the city of San Gil de Buena-vista. Afterwards his march led him into the valley of Olancho (Honduras), where, when Francisco Fernández de Córdova learned of his presence in the locality, he sent against him Hernando de Soto, whom González put to rout. After the victory González, not deeming himself strong enough to drive Pedrarias' forces out of Nicaragua, retired to Puerto Caballos.

As though this were not enough, a third competitor appeared in the lists, for Hernán Cortés, after his great conquest of Mexico, had also undertaken the quest of the Dudosos Strait. To this end, he despatched two expeditions, one by land, under the command of Don Pedro de Alvarado, and the other by sea, under Cristóbal de Olid. This illustrious Captain, taking González Dávila by surprise, fell upon him and made him prisoner. Immediately afterward, however, as did so many others during the conquest of America, Olid rebelled against his chief, and as soon as the intelligence reached Cortés, he despatched a third force to Honduras by water, captained by his relative Francisco de Las Casas, who also fell into the power of the rebel leader.

Unfortunately for Olid, himself valor personified, he underestimated his prisoners and had cause to regret his mistake. Both were men of great force of character, and, as he allowed them to communicate with his soldiers, among whom many were devoted to Cortés, the two prisoners conspired against him. One night, while Olid was conversing with them and entirely off his guard, Francisco de Las Casas suddenly sprang upon him, and, seizing him by the beard, aimed a blow at him with a paper cutter, while González, in his turn, wounded him in several places with a weapon he had wrested from a soldier of

the guard. Olid escaped further injury and succeeded in hiding himself, but he was later discovered and beheaded by Las Casas. Las Casas at once returned to Mexico, taking González with him as a prisoner. González was eventually sent back to Spain, in chains, for trial, and the famous adventurer died at Avila in 1526, soon after his arrival on the Peninsula.

The town of Bruselas was destined soon to disappear. When the *Audiencia*¹ of Santo Domingo was informed of the serious disturbances that had broken out in Honduras between Fernández de Córdova, Gil González, Cristóbal de Olid and Francisco de Las Casas, it sent the *Fiscal* (Attorney General), Pedro Moreno, to put things in order, with particular instructions to leave the government of Nicaragua to González Dávila. Whereupon Fernández de Córdova, who had a considerable force under him, and who was well fortified in Granada, concluded that the moment had arrived to shake off the authority of Pedrarias and himself assume command over the rich province. To this end, he convoked the principal inhabitants and proposed to them at the meeting that the government of

¹ The *audiencia* was a superior judicial tribunal, which was, besides, under the ancient colonial régime of Spain, a governing body, exercising administrative functions and having civil jurisdiction over one or more provinces. *Diccionario razonado de Legislación y Jurisdicción*, by Escriche. *Translator*.

Nicaragua ought to depend entirely upon the *Audiencia* of Santo Domingo. Nearly all assented to his wishes. The Captains Hernando de Soto and Francisco Campañón having declared vigorously in favor of Pedrarias, Fernández de Córdoba imprisoned De Soto in the fortress at Granada, because of his opposition, whence he was rescued by his friend Campañón with the aid of twelve resolute men, all of whom escaped by land to Panama. This occurred in 1525.

When Hernando de Soto succeeded in reaching Panama after having undergone severe hardships on the way, he acquainted his chief with the events in Nicaragua, and, with all speed, and undaunted by age and disease—for by that time he had passed his seventieth year and was afflicted with gout—Pedrarias assembled such munitions of war as were at his disposal and in the beginning of the year 1526 embarked for Natá. Here he completed his preparations, after which Benito Hurtado and Hernando de Soto set out by land with a part of the force, while Pedrarias proceeded by sea as far as the Island of Chira, and took possession with much solemnity on the 16th of March, 1526.² Here he learned that the town of Bruselas had been de-

²Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 707.

populated by order of Fernández de Córdoba in order that he might be provided with a stronger force for the defense of the fortress at Granada.

Fernández de Córdoba's interest in the rebellion against Pedrarias, however, had begun to flag. Having heard that he was trying to escape, Pedrarias arranged that the *Veedor*,³ Martín Estete, should advance under secret orders to arrest him; he himself was to follow his emissary by way of Nicoya, where Hurtado and Hernando de Soto were to join him. On the way he learned that Estete had succeeded without disturbance in imprisoning the rebellious lieutenant in the latter's own fortress at Granada. Pedrarias had barely arrived in that city before he ordered his *Alcalde mayor*, Diego de Molina, to summon Fernández de Córdoba to give an account of his administration. Having meanwhile received news that Pedro de Alvarado was in Chorotega Malalacá,⁴ he hastened to remove his prisoner to León, and, arming all the available soldiers, sent them, under the command of Hernán Ponce de León, Andrés Garabito and Francisco Campañón, against Cortés' doughty captain, to contest his advance upon Nicaragua.

But at this stage Cortés and Alvarado, who,

³ Under the Spanish colonial régime, the *veedor* was the overseer or inspector of prisons, exercising functions similar to those of sheriff in the United States. *Translator.*

⁴ Choluteca, in Honduras.



DON PEDRO DE ALVARADO, CONQUEROR OF GUATEMALA.

From a painting in the Archives of the Indies at Seville.

it appears, had a secret understanding with Fernández de Córdoba, were forced to return to Mexico, which had broken out in revolt in the absence of the Conqueror. Thus Pedrarias, relieved of the fears that been inspired by the nearness of such awesome rivals, was left in free tranquillity to satisfy his vengeance. He destroyed Fernández de Córdoba as he had destroyed Vasco Núñez de Balboa.

Although then, by order of Pedrarias, the town of Bruselas was repeopled by Captain Gonzalo de Badajoz in 1526, and the Indians of the neighborhood parceled out anew among the inhabitants, this second attempt was fated to have no better result than the first. For, in the government of Castilla del Oro, Pedrarias was superseded by Pedro de los Ríos, and had to return to Panama to respond to the many charges brought against him in a proceeding instituted for the purpose of calling him to account for the administration of his office, and the government of Nicaragua remaining vacant, Diego López de Salcedo, Governor of Honduras, sought to take possession of it for himself. Also Pedro de los Ríos, as heir to the rights of Pedrarias, laid claim to it and proceeded to Bruselas, where his pretensions were recognized. But, as Salcedo had already established his authority in León, Pedro de los Ríos was forced to return imme-

diately to Panama, and, as a punishment for having declared in his favor, the town was depopulated a second time by virtue of an order from Salcedo.

The execution of the order was entrusted to Captain Garabito, who, with eighty foot soldiers and seventy horses, established his camp at Nicoya, from whence he entered into correspondence with the citizens of Bruselas, calling upon them to abandon the city and remove to León and not oblige him to resort to force, and offering them many inducements in the name of Salcedo. The greater part of the inhabitants abandoned their houses; eventually only the Governor's lieutenant and some few of his friends remained, and, for fear of the great number of Indians that were preparing to attack them, they also had to take their departure in the end. Later, Pedrarias, who by that time had been appointed Governor of Nicaragua, stirred up a dispute with Pedro de los Ríos, Governor of Castilla del Oro, concerning the possession of the destroyed town. By royal decree of 1529 it was declared to belong to the government of Nicaragua.

Thus ends the brief history of Bruselas, the first town founded by the Spaniards in the territory of Costa Rica. The Indians inhabiting the shores of the Gulf of Nicoya and distributed

among the inhabitants were treated with great barbarity. Those who did not die of fatigue from their employment as beasts of burden were forcibly taken from their lands, branded by hot irons ⁵ and sent to Panama, Peru and elsewhere to be sold as slaves. Against these cruelties, the Chorotegas, who at first submitted, later rebelled, and many Indians of other tribes and from the Island of Chira, flying from the Spaniards, sought refuge with them; ⁶ for, after the destruction of Bruselas, they were parceled out anew among the inhabitants of the cities of León and Granada, Pedrarias reserving for himself the best of those in Nicoya. Even the Indians of that region, though they had from the first submitted and shown fidelity to the conquerors, did not on this account receive preferment. On the contrary, there was no exaction or outrage of which they were not made victims. Being located along the road from Nicaragua, travelers entering the village exacted from them provisions and burden-bearers and those who were taken were forcibly torn from their homes to be sold in distant lands.

Neither López de Salcedo nor Pedro de los Ríos saw the realization of his ambition. Just as every one had reached the conclusion that the

⁵ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 64.

⁶ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, p. 199.

fall of Pedrarias was an accomplished fact, the King unexpectedly appointed him Governor of Nicaragua, in 1527—influenced largely, it is to be supposed, by the money that Pedrarias had sent to the court by his favorite, Gaspar de Espinosa—and Pedrarias maintained himself in the government of Nicaragua until his death, in León, on the 6th of March, 1531, in spite of all the atrocities he had committed. He was a veritable scourge of humanity—a man who found his pleasure in the spectacle of Indians being torn to pieces by dogs that had been specially trained for the purpose.⁷

Although it is not possible to give the date exactly, it was very probably in 1524 that Captain Andrés Garabito, Lieutenant-Governor of the city of Bruselas, made an excursion into the territory of Costa Rica, which was occupied by the western Guetares. Of this expedition there remains no record but the allusion made to it by the Padre Estrada Rávago (in a letter wherein he says that because of this invader's presence there the principal *cacique* or king of those Indians bore the name of Garabito, by which he was afterwards known), and the following paragraph of López de Velasco's geography: "The first who entered this province (Costa Rica) was Captain Garabito, with powers conferred on him

⁷ Oviedo, Book XLII, chap. XI.

by Pedrarias Dávila, Governor of Panama." The name of Garabito is still retained by a place located not far from the city of Esparza. Captain Garabito died suddenly at León de Nicaragua during a *fiesta de cañas*.⁸

During his government, Pedrarias made careful search for the outlet of the great lake of Nicaragua. From the moment González Dávila discovered the lake, in fact, there was born a desire to find the communication that all believed must exist between it and the Atlantic. In 1525 Francisco Fernández de Córdova, with this object in view, ordered the construction of a barkentine, in which Captain Ruy Díaz set out to explore. He discovered the outlet but could proceed no farther than the first rapids. Persisting in his purpose, however, he sent a second expedition under the orders of Hernando de Soto, but this leader also failed to pass beyond the village of Voto, situated in the vicinity of the Toro rapids.

Master as Pedrarias was of the arts of murder, robbery and enslavement of Indians, usurpation and cutting off of heads, he had never done much for the general advancement. Yet, resolving at length to attempt something, in the year 1529 he sent Martín Estete to explore

⁸ A tournament in which the contestants fought with canes or reeds instead of lances. *Translator.*

anew the outlet of the famous lake. Estete likewise navigated as far as Voto, where he left his vessel and continued by land along the right bank of the river until he arrived in the province of Suerre, among the level, low-lying plains on the Atlantic coast, known to-day by the name of Tortuguero.⁹ There the Indians opposed such an energetic resistance that he was forced to retreat. Thanks, however, to the skill and courage of the efficient captains who accompanied him—particularly Gabriel de Rojas—he was saved from complete disaster.¹⁰ During this exploration the Indians told of another and very large lake, and several Spanish soldiers viewed it from a height. The “lake” they looked down upon was the Atlantic Ocean, though this the natives of Nicaragua did not know.¹¹

⁹The region called by the Indians “Suerre” extended to the right of the rivers Sarapiquí and San Juan as far as Reventazón River.

¹⁰Oviedo, Book XLII, chap. 4; Peralta, *ibid.*, p. 723.

¹¹Oviedo, *supra*.

CHAPTER VII

FELIPE GUTIÉRREZ' EXPEDITION TO VERAGUA—THE DUKEDOM OF VERAGUA

1584-1556

FOR some time after the terrible disaster to Diego de Nicuesa in 1510, no further efforts were made to colonize that part of the Costa Rican territory which bordered the Atlantic and was then known by the name of Veragua. The famous suit instituted by Don Diego Columbus in 1508 against the Crown was still in progress, maintained by his heirs, and especially by Don Fernando, who was the moving spirit in the case. Desiring to reap some benefit from a country so noted for its riches, but which up to that moment had brought to the family of Columbus nothing but disappointment and litigation, Doña María de Toledo, Vicereine of the Indies and widow of Don Diego, resolved to send out a governor, and in this the Council of the Indies acquiesced, with the understanding that the governor should be appointed by the King, and that all rights of the Admiral, residing in Don Luis Columbus, son of Don Diego, should be reserved.

The matter thus adjusted, the Vicereine confided her interests to a priest by the name of Juan de Sosa, who had returned to Spain from Peru with some eight or ten thousand *pesos* of the treasure extorted from Atahualpa.¹ The command of the expedition was given to Felipe Gutiérrez, a gentleman and courtier of Madrid, and son of the royal treasurer, Alonso Gutiérrez, with the title of Governor of Veragua, on the 24th of December, 1534. The boundaries of his government were defined to be from the limits of the government of Castilla del Oro to Cape Gracias á Dios.

Gutiérrez and Juan de Sosa left the port of Sanlúcar in July, 1535, though before sailing a violent quarrel had taken place amongst their men, many of whom were killed and wounded. At the island of Española they provided themselves with horses, and from thence continued their voyage in two splendid ships and a galleon, with a company of four hundred men. Through the error of the chief pilot of the armada, they came to a halt at Cajinas Point, or Cape Honduras, whereas what they were in search of was the region to the east of Chiriquí Lagoon; that is, the real Veragua. Afterwards, recognizing the mistake, they pursued an eastward course.

¹The Emperor of the Incas, captured by Francisco Pizarro in his conquest of Peru. *Translator.*



TERRA COTTA VASE FROM NICOYA.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

For a time the three vessels were separated, but later reunited at the Escudo island, where the first to arrive was the governor's ship, then the galleon and last of all the ship bearing Juan de Sosa.

A small boat that had been sent to the mainland returned at the end of a week bringing hammocks, earthen pots and other articles found in the houses of the Indians. Notwithstanding the contrary opinion of the pilot, one Liaño, this led to the belief that they had reached Veragua; so to remove all doubt other boats were despatched, which came upon some islands supposed to be those of Zorobará, and later it developed that the surmise was correct. But still, in spite of all this, the pilot did not give in but insisted on continuing their course to the east; and Felipe Gutiérrez, even yet undecided, directed Juan de Sosa, two pilots and several captains to the islands to reconnoiter once more. On one of them they succeeded in capturing an Indian. On questioning him from a memorandum that had been given them by an old servant of the Vicereine, who had been a companion of Columbus on his voyage to Veragua, the Indian, as the names of the places stated were read off to him, was able to indicate where they were. Still unwilling to acknowledge defeat, the pilot said that the Indian was deceiving them, and, as

between the word of an Indian and that of a Spanish pilot there could be no question of doubt, the armada sailed on as far as the islands of Secativa, which lay beyond Nombre de Dios; and then, when, having arrived at these islands, the pilot had no recourse but to acknowledge his error, the armada retraced its course, and at last came upon the shores of the true Veragua of Columbus.

On the banks of a river supposed to have been the Belén, or the Veragua, in the territory of the present Republic of Panama, Felipe Gutiérrez founded a city, which he called Concepción. From the very first days of its existence it lay under the shadow of misfortune. The lack of provisions and the heroic resistance of the Indians soon transformed this new attempt at colonization there in Veragua into a terrible and complete failure. The various excursions into the interior of the country added to the list of bloody disasters; after each, the Spaniards were forced to return to Concepción with empty hands and lessened courage. This was the experience of the Captains Carrillo Gutiérrez, Alonso de Pisa, Pedro de Encinasola, Cristóbal Enríquez and others. The elements too showed themselves no more kindly than the Indians. A ship which Felipe Gutiérrez had sent to Jamaica for provisions was lost at sea; Juan de Sosa's

vessel, in which were stored the provisions brought by that priest, was forced to take refuge from a storm at Cartagena, where it was promptly seized, with all its precious freight, by Pedro de Heredia; the third ship alone was saved, this having been despatched to Nombre de Dios in quest of assistance.²

Hunger soon made itself felt in Concepción itself, and when the soldiers begged Felipe Gutiérrez, who still had a small store of provisions, not to let them perish from starvation, he answered with contempt, and bade them forage among the villages of the Indians. The advice was followed, but with each attempt the soldiers succeeded only in being driven back with the utmost fierceness. So great was their suffering that, on their return from one of these expeditions, two of the soldiers satisfied their hunger on the remains of an Indian they found lying dead in their path. Later the same men, with certain others, killed one Hernán Dienes, a Sevillano who had fallen sick, and ate his remains. The same fate overtook another unfortunate named Alonso González, a native of Ronda, over whose brains and entrails the famished men fought like wolves. While planning similar treatment of another Spaniard, the

² León Fernández—Manuscript now in possession of the author.

prospective victim learned of their designs and denounced them to Felipe Gutiérrez, who had them arrested and punished with the greatest severity.³

Emboldened by their repeated victories, the Indians abandoned the defensive and laid siege to the city of Concepción, which soon found itself in a desperate situation, and all the Spaniards among its inhabitants would surely have perished, had not a soldier, Iñigo López Carrillo, by a lucky shot with his cross-bow, killed the principal *cacique*—an imposing figure, by the way, who wore on his breast a huge golden disk—for with the death of their chieftain the Indians retired. Notwithstanding this momentary relief, however, Felipe Gutiérrez decided that there remained no resource but flight, and at once despatched several men by way of the coast to Nombre de Dios to ask for help. From that port they sent him a ship, and in it he and some sixty of his companions embarked, abandoning the others to the perils of that hostile beach. As a result of that act of villainy nearly all of those left behind perished from hunger or were killed by the Indians.

Felipe Gutiérrez arrived at Panama in the beginning of 1536, and there learned that letters from Francisco Pizarro had been received urg-

³ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, pp. 436 and 450.

ing upon any who could to come to his assistance. He, therefore, determined to sail for Peru with the few survivors of his ill-fated expedition. In this new field he was more fortunate. In 1548 he commanded with Diego de Rojas an expedition to Argentina and reached as far as Córdoba and the Paraná River, but finally came to a tragic end. He was beheaded by order of Gonzalo Pizarro, in whose rebellion he had refused to join.

The disaster to Felipe Gutiérrez created much excitement at court, where the misfortunes of Columbus and Nicuesa had not yet been forgotten. Veragua had already become synonymous with starvation and death. Still the illusions born of Columbus' enthusiasm over this last of his discoveries were so deep-rooted in the souls of his descendants that they never lost heart at the news of the repeated calamities; with increasing tenacity they persisted in their claim to the possession of that land of gold. Persuaded at length that they would never succeed in obtaining all that was rightfully theirs, they resolved to enter into negotiations with the Crown to put an end to the litigation which for so many years they had maintained. It was thus agreed that the case should be submitted to arbitration. The arbitrator chosen was the Cardinal Fray García de Loayza, Bishop

of Sigüenza, President of the Council of the Indies and confessor of the Emperor Charles V.

On the 7th of July, 1537, the Cardinal rendered his decision, and in conformity with the award the King, on the 19th of January, 1537, granted to Don Luis Columbus the title of duke, with a domain in the province of Veragua, so delimited with mathematical precision, by latitude and longitude, as to form a perfect square, each side 25 leagues in length. The grant extended from the Belén River, inclusive, to the west and south of that river, thus embracing what was to become a part of the territory that Philip II. assigned to the province of Costa Rica when, in 1573 and 1574, he definitely established the bounds of that province.

Naturally, this arbitral award was very far from satisfying the demands of Columbus' heir, who, among other things, claimed the Viceroyalty of all the Indies. He at least, however, saw the realization of his dream of the possession of Veragua—the veritable Veragua of Columbus; that is, of the twenty-five leagues of it extending between the Chiriquí Lagoon and the Belén River.

It is not clear whether the measure relating to the dukedom was carried into effect as ordered by the King, but, however this may have been determined, it did not operate to prevent the

Duke of Veragua's assumption of the possession of his domain. To effect this, he sent out, in 1546, an expedition of 180 men under the command of Cristóbal de Peña. It was, however, cut to pieces by the Indians, only fifteen or twenty managing to escape. In this adventure Don Francisco Columbus, a grandson of the discoverer of America and brother of Don Luis, lost his life. In the following year the Duke despatched a new expedition, captained by Juan Fernández de Rebolledo, who was no more successful than Peña.

Under these circumstances it is easy to understand why the heir of Columbus, finally disheartened by so many and such terrible disasters, lost the last of his illusions concerning the famous Veragua, and, in consequence, resolved to surrender his dukedom to the Crown, as well as certain privileges still remaining to him, in exchange for an annual pension of 7,000 ducats. The settlement was signed on the 2nd of December, 1556, and was in reality the sole practical benefit that resulted to Christopher Columbus' posterity from his golden dreams.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCOVERY OF THE SAN JUAN CHANNEL, OR RIVER, BY
CAPTAIN ALONSO CALERO AND DIEGO MACHUCA DE
ZUAZO

1589

IN 1529, following the expedition of Martín Estete in search of the Desaguadero (the long-sought channel draining Lake Nicaragua), other fruitless attempts were made to discover the communication between this lake and the Atlantic Ocean—a consummation all considered to be of the highest importance to that country. Moreover, the officers in Spain having in charge the management of American affairs showed no less interest in the matter. They believed that the regions watered by this river were thickly populated and of great richness, and that it was from them that Montezuma's gold had been brought to Yucatan.¹ Thus it was that the Queen, Doña Juana (mother of the Emperor Charles V.), by royal decree of September 9th, 1586, ordered the Governor of Nicaragua to build such barkentines as he

¹ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 117.

deemed necessary and to despatch them, suitably manned and provisioned, and under the command of a competent and reliable officer, on an expedition to discover the secrets of the river and adjacent territory.

The Governor of Nicaragua at this period was Rodrigo de Contreras, successor and son-in-law of Pedrarias, for he had married Doña María de Peñalosa, who, with the ocean between them, had been married to Vasco Núñez de Balboa. Contreras was, besides, a worthy disciple of his defunct father-in-law, which is tantamount to saying that he was cruel, avaricious, false and endowed with small initiative. Since in the effort such experienced and courageous men as Captains Ruy Díaz, Hernando de Soto, Martín Estete, and others less illustrious, had failed, it must be recorded also that in Nicaragua the undertaking to reach the Atlantic through the Desaguadero was held to be most difficult and dangerous. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Contreras was not altogether confident of success. However, as the order of the Queen was mandatory, he made certain preliminary moves to carry it into effect. These plans of his were upset by the energetic opposition of Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, who was then in Nicaragua and who doubtless foresaw the fate to which the poor Indians would be subjected.

Contreras brought his preparations to a halt before the opposition of the virtuous and charitable friar, doubtless dissimulating in order to account for his inactivity; such a supposition is quite possible when one considers that the Governor of Nicaragua was a man equally as unscrupulous as Pedrarias.

The vigorous spirit of enterprise that characterized the Spaniards of that period, however, came to the rescue of Contreras' faltering resolution. Captains Alonso Calero and Diego Machuca de Zuazo offered to undertake the discovery ordered by the Crown, with the help of other inhabitants of Nicaragua, and to this end entered into a contract with the Governor by virtue of which the latter reserved to himself a third part of the fruits to be realized, alleging, falsely, that such was the Queen's command. Calero and Machuca de Zuazo built the necessary boats, bought abundant supplies, forty horses and fifty hogs, and, accompanied by several priests, more than a hundred Spanish soldiers and a force of Indian servants, set forth in a little flotilla comprising two barkentines, or lateen-rigged boats, one large vessel and four canoes.

On the 7th of April, 1539, they passed through the small islands near the city of Granada, with the intention of dropping anchor



WAR MACE HEAD.

National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

at the most distant of them. Believing it to be dangerous to cross the lake with boats so heavily laden, Captain Calero called a council of war, whereat it was determined that half of the cargo should be left on the island; and that Machuca should transfer the other half to the island of La Ceiba, utilizing the barkentines and canoes for the purpose; later, he was to return for that left behind. This arrangement was carried out, and as soon as the boats returned, Calero went forward in his turn. Arrived at La Ceiba, he caused all the men and provisions to be re-embarked and spent the night at a point of land about four leagues distant. On the following morning the expedition continued on its way, keeping always close to the coast—chiefly because of a strong wind that bore against the bow and so impeded their progress that they were eventually forced to cast anchor. Soon those who had sailed on the boat bearing the horses were heard to cry out that they had sprung a leak and were sinking, whereupon Calero ordered the whole squadron to make for the shore, then but one or two leagues distant, and which they were able to reach by afternoon. On the following day they put the horses ashore, and, on examining the supposedly damaged boat, found it to be in good condition.

To avoid further trouble of this nature, it was

arranged that Machuca, with the horses, should continue the march by land, and Calero by water. The latter came to anchor at a point near a great river; Captain Machuca arrived later and there they made their camp. To facilitate their passage, they threw a rope across the river and by this means reached the opposite bank without incident—the soldiers in canoes and the horses by swimming. From that point Calero proceeded to the islands of Mayalí, whence he sent instructions to Machuca to await him in the port of that name situated on the mainland, but, as that officer had gone on beyond, the juncture was effected in the neighborhood of some small uninhabited islands two leagues from Mayalí, where the men and horses again went aboard and the flotilla passed the night. After having sailed two days, they came upon two more, situated to the left of the Solentiname Islands and near the coast.²

Here Calero ordered Machuca to put ashore the Indians, women and the cargo above decks, and went, himself, with twenty men to the islands of Solentiname in search of a guide. That same night he succeeded in capturing an Indian who proved to be well acquainted with the river and the dialects of the tribes located along the banks. The day following the Captain continued his

² The Balsillas Islands.

voyage, finally arriving at the point of beginning of the Desaguadero, which, as before stated, was discovered, in 1525, by the famous captain, Ruy Díaz.

On the 1st of May they commenced to descend the river, Calero going in advance with two gentlemen at arms in a small canoe. On their way they saw two islands, a great river that flowed from the south,³ and several small streams. Before long, observing that the current was becoming rapid, they halted and Captain Calero went ahead in his canoe to investigate the cause. At a turn of the river he came in sight of a number of Indians who were fishing in some rapids. Then, immediately retracing his course without having been discovered, he advanced again, this time in a larger canoe, manned by ten soldiers, leaving orders with the *Veedor*, Alonso Ramírez, to follow with ten more, and surprised the Indians, who were four in number, and succeeded in capturing three. They also seized two canoes in which there was a great fishing net and six fishes each weighing about two *arrobas* (fifty pounds), "the most beautiful sight to be seen anywhere."⁴

On the next day the boats came to anchor in

³The Medio Queso River.

⁴Peralta—*Ibid.*, p. 732. León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 63.

a bay-like stretch of water. The Indian prisoners told the Spaniards that the name of their village was Abito and that it was situated on the northern border; that the Desaguadero had five rapids, and that beyond those then confronting them ⁶ was another series called Casa del Diablo ⁶ (The House of the Devil). Calero, therefore, directed Machuca to push forward with twenty men to examine the river course. Having passed the Diablo rapids, Machuca came to another series farther down, known to-day as Machuca Rapids in commemoration of his discovery. At the end of two days, he returned and reported that in his judgment the passage of the boats over that route would be difficult. Damián Rodríguez, who had gone with another force of twenty men in search of the village of Abito, on the upper waters of the Sábalo del Norte River, also returned, after an absence of four days, without having found the place.

Captain Calero thereupon took four canoes and, accompanied by the Padre Morales and forty men, traveled for two days down the lower Desaguadero and passed the night of the second day near the village of Pocosol, on the river of that name.⁷ There he surprised the village

⁶ Toro rapids.

⁶ Castillo rapids.

⁷ The Pocosol River to which reference is here made is not the one which at present bears that name, but the San Carlos



TERRA COTTA INCENSE BURNER.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

at dawn and on an island formed by that river and another that came from Voto,⁸ discovered a *buhío*. Because of the great noise made by the canoes, he was able to capture only one Indian and a few women, who told him that during the preceding month a *cacique* called Torí had destroyed a neighboring village in which remained only the *cacique* and four old women, the rest of the inhabitants having been killed or carried away.

At this Calero went up the Pocosol River in search of the unfortunate *cacique*, and, having found him, brought him back to camp. The Indian told him that ten moons ago the *cacique* Voto had arrived before his village with four canoes manned by many warriors, and had killed a large number of his people and carried off many women and children; also that, the month before, Torí had attacked him, and had murdered and taken into captivity the rest of his subjects, so that there then remained with him only the four old women that had been mentioned.

Questioned as to the condition of the river,

or Cutris River, according to Don León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 64.

⁸ Botos or Votos is the name of the Indians who occupied the eastern cordillera of Costa Rica, which extends from the Barva River to the Orosí River and is known as the Tilarán Range. Its name is still preserved in the volcano of Votos or Poás. León Fernández—*ibid.*, p. 64.

he said that from that point * as far as Torí¹⁰ there were no rapids, but that from the last named village to Suerre there were a swift current and many rocks. Acting on this information, Captain Calero returned to the place where the boats were awaiting him. The return trip consumed five days because of the great difficulties he had to overcome in passing through some rapids. On his arrival at the camp, he sent Machuca de Zuazo, with a canoe and a sufficient force of men, on an expedition of discovery along the Sábalos del Norte River, which had already been explored without incident by Damián Rodríguez and near which a camp had been established. Machuca proceeded up stream for two days, and then went ashore, and, after half a day's march, came to a halt in the cornfields near a village. Following the instructions given him by Calero, he did not advance farther for fear of alarming the Indians.

On the way back, Machuca met a body of sixty men who had with them several horses, and who had been awaiting him in order to undertake a new expedition along the same river. With these, and without loss of time, he set forth anew, for Calero had allowed him but

*The river San Carlos.

¹⁰ According to Don León Fernández, in his *Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 65, this village of Torí was situated below the Sarapiquí River.

fifteen days within which to return. At the end of the eleventh day, five emissaries from Machuca came in with twenty Indians, bearing maize and a letter from their chief containing favorable accounts of the country, especially the village of Yará. Calero sent back by the bearers instructions to Machuca to pass through this last-named place and informing him that he would proceed to Torí with the flotilla and there await his return. In obedience to this order, Machuca continued his march by land, ever increasing his distance from the left bank of the Desaguadero or San Juan River, until he arrived at the Yará¹¹ River, which empties into the Atlantic near Cape Gracias á Dios. During this long trip the expedition suffered cruelly from hunger and other hardships—so extremely, indeed, that they were compelled to eat their horses—withstanding which Machuca succeeded in making his way to Granada with the few remaining men of his command who had not perished from exposure and want.

After Machuca's departure, Calero, who had been established at the mouth of the Sábalo del Norte River from May 2nd to the 8th of June, struck camp, and on the latter date his boats made the passage of the Toro rapids. At the Castillo rapids the boat in which the Captain

¹¹ The Segovia, Yará, Yare, Coco, or Wanks River.

was making soundings of the river ran against a rock and capsized, causing a loss of all their swords and shields; not knowing how to swim, Calero himself narrowly escaped drowning. He was only saved by an Indian who dragged him out and lifted him on to a rock, where he was later found and picked up by one of the canoes. In their passage through the subsequent rapids no incident of importance occurred, so the little squadron arrived in its entirety at the Pocosol River, and there remained ten days awaiting Machuca.

At the end of the ten days, as the latter did not appear and the provisions were growing scarce, it became necessary to push forward. The expedition proceeded to the mouth of the Sarapiquí or Zaquiribí River, where the guides told them there was an important village, and Calero instructed Hernán Márquez to go ashore with twenty men in two of the canoes, and sack the place, but the undertaking failed because the Indians having been warned of it, had abandoned the village and burned it to the ground. A day and a half after its departure from Pocosol, the flotilla approached the village of Torí and hove to a quarter of a league off shore. This time Hernán Márquez was more fortunate. Setting out stealthily at night, he surprised the village at break of day, and, falling upon the Indians,

carried away many prisoners and much booty, amounting in value to 170 *castellanos*.

But, as no eatables were to be found in these places, Calero followed the advice of an Indian trader who had been captured at Torí and set out in search of Suerre, for the Indian had told him that in the country round about there were numerous villages, an abundance of food and much gold; and before long, as the adventurers were advancing, suddenly the Atlantic spread out before their eyes. This, however, all thought was another lake like that of Nicaragua, as the Indians, with singular unanimity, so assured them. Here, in crossing the bar, they met with serious difficulties, though none of the boats suffered severe injury. Nevertheless Calero quickly decided to take to pieces the barque that had served as a transport for the horses and transform it into a *fragata*¹² with which to explore the rivers. While this work was in progress, he ordered Hernán Márquez to take the *San Juan*, the smaller of the two lateen-rigged boats, and reconnoiter the coast towards the north to ascertain whether Captain Machuca had yet reached the coast from the interior.

For ten days Márquez cruised about and then the pilot lost his bearings, and he was obliged to

¹² A light-draught boat for service in shallow rivers. *Translator.*

return, hard pressed by hunger and thirst. When he had rested four days, Calero ordered him to set out once more, this time towards Guaymura,¹⁸ a place near which, the Indians said, a river called Yará emptied into the sea. On this second excursion, under the guidance of an Indian, Márquez succeeded in reaching the river. He ascended to the upper waters in a canoe, having left his boat at the mouth, and, at the end of three days, came to a hut where he found an Indian who had escaped from Machuca. From the fugitive he learned that Machuca was then three days' journey distant from that place. It happened, however, that that very night seven of the eleven soldiers who had accompanied Márquez deserted. Not daring to continue, therefore, he returned to the mouth of the Yará, where he found awaiting him the boat and began to retrace his course. After having sailed five days, he met Alonso Calero, who had subsequently left in the lateen-rigged boat and *fragata*, and both made for the Yará River, which they entered with all their boats. After navigating the upper waters for five days they came to a halt and Calero ordered Márquez to take ten soldiers and the guides and set out in search of the lost captain. Márquez soon discovered Machuca's trail, followed it for a day and then

¹⁸ Honduras.

returned; during the march the Indians had killed four of his men.

Much irritated by the lack of perseverance shown by his lieutenant, Calero picked out ten of his best men and ordered them to follow Machuca's tracks with all despatch, first informing them that it was his purpose to return with the boats to the mouth of the river, but that he would leave them a canoe in which to rejoin him later. Having reached the sea, he boarded the *fragata* with the other ten men, and went in search of food, setting his course towards a river where he was told there was a village. The first day out he stopped at some small islands; during the second, a violent hurricane struck him with such fury that the *fragata* was capsized and lay with her keel in the air. Miraculously, it seemed, the twenty-two Spaniards and the Indians manning the boats were able to save themselves by clinging to the keel.

Calero, as has been said, did not know how to swim and was greatly weakened by swamp fever besides. In this desperate condition the shipwrecked unfortunates remained for more than an hour,—the playthings of the mighty waves—with no hope of being saved, when several stout-hearted *hidalgos* began to say, "Let us find some way of saving the Captain." Calero answered them: "How can you save me who

cannot swim?" They replied, "We will take you off on one of the hatches." "If that can be done," exclaimed the doughty leader, "save yourselves, the Indians will look after me." Calero was wise in wishing to trust his life to the resourcefulness of the Indians. Some of them pushed one of the hatches alongside the *fragata*, the Captain threw himself on it face down, and the expert swimmers brought him safely to land, where he was the first of all to arrive. But other Spaniards also reached the shore, lashed to oars and planks they found floating about them; only three, through fear of taking the plunge, held fast to the keel with the guides and interpreters.

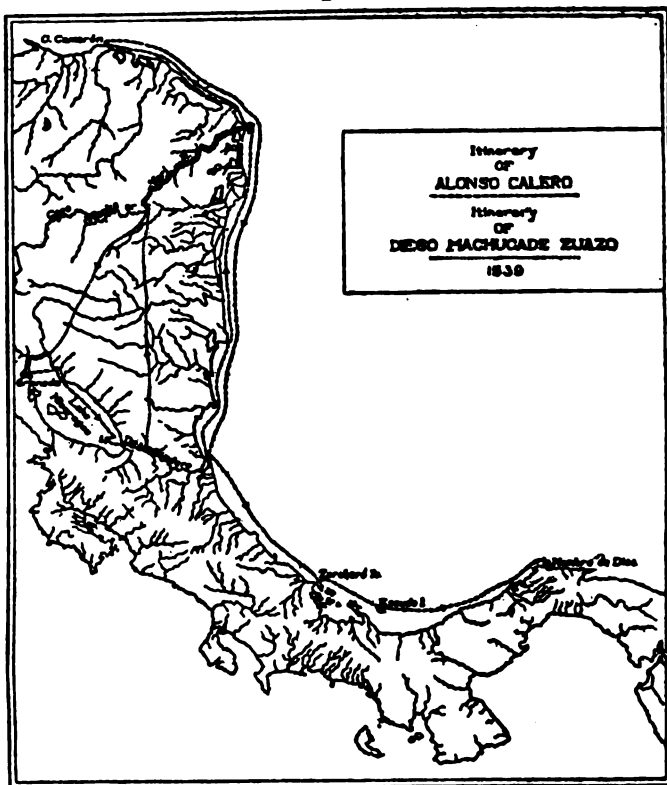
The following morning the *fragata* was no longer visible to those on land; later it was found on the rocks. None of those who had remained on the wreck was missing except the guides, who had profited by the opportunity to escape by swimming. With great labor the crew succeeded in setting the boat afloat, and, utilizing some oars they picked up on the beach, returned in search of the other vessels, on which a priest and some sick men had been left. While on their course, they descried in the distance the sail of a sea-going ship and thus became convinced that they were on the Atlantic instead of another great lake as the Nicaraguan natives

believed and insisted. On their arrival at the place where the other vessels were anchored, the indefatigable captain took the smallest of them, and with ten men—most of whom, like himself, were sick—went in search of food; but, so scant was their success that they would have perished from hunger had it not been for a sea calf and some small birds they found on an island.

In the course of this excursion, Alonso Calero explored many rivers and went as far as Cape Camarón.¹⁴ When he returned to the other boats, he found that many of his company had died from their hardships, and that the ten men sent out in quest of Machuca had not returned; so, in order that he might be in readiness for an emergency, he had the mast and sails removed from the smaller barkentine and transferred to the larger, and then, having called together the few followers remaining to him, addressed them as follows: "My brothers, I am now convinced that we are on the North Sea (Atlantic Ocean), and that the best port to make for in order to save our lives is Nombre de Dios, which I find to be but eighty leagues distant; for we no longer have the arms to row with for the return by way of the Nicaragua River, nor the feet with which to walk should we try to go back by land. Let us, then, put to sea and commit ourselves to

¹⁴ Peralta, *ibid.*, p. 740.

the winds that God may send us. By no other means can we reach a place of safety."



It was words such as these, Roman in their simplicity, that were used by these extraordinary men. History has not always accorded them the justice they merit. In many cases, their exploits have remained long years unknown.¹⁵

¹⁵ The details in connection with the discovery of the San Juan River by Alonso Calero and Diego Machuca de Zuazo

After this, with the consent of his companions, the Captain gave the order to hoist sail, and a run of a day and a half brought the barkentine and *fragata* to the mouth of the San Juan, where they took on some water, though for lack of casks they were able to ship but a small supply. So terrible, indeed, at length became their thirst, that two of the Spaniards died from drinking salt water. Yet, under the direction of Calero, who himself acted as pilot, the vessels still pursued their course and at the end of two days had succeeded in making the Islands of Zorobará. On one of them the wretched voyagers found a quantity of shellfish and birds and an abundance of fish, with which they satisfied their hunger. From Almirante Bay they then passed on to Escudo Island and thence to Nombre de Dios, where they came to anchor in November, 1539—seven months after their departure from Granada.

Besides Alonso Calero, but eight Spaniards and twenty-five Indians arrived in port, the sole survivors of that admirable expedition. To us of to-day the story seems almost incredible; but so do many of the experiences of the Spaniards in the conquest of America.

were unknown prior to 1883, the date of the publication of Don Manuel M. de Peralta's book—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá en el siglo XVI*. To the labors and ability of our illustrious compatriot is due the fact that events of such great importance have passed into the domain of recorded history.

CHAPTER IX

THE PERSEVERANCE OF ALONSO CALERO—THE AUDIENCIA OF PANAMA—THE NAME OF COSTA RICA MAKES ITS APPEARANCE—HERNÁN SÁNCHEZ DE BADAJOZ—THE CITY OF BADAJOZ, THE PORT OF SAN MARCOS AND FORTRESS OF MARBELLA—CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GOVERNORS OF COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA—THE CRUELTY OF RODRIGO DE CONTRERAS

1540-1541

UNDISMAYED by the terrible experience through which he had passed, and without even stopping for a well-earned rest, Captain Calero had no sooner set foot in Nombre de Dios than he returned to the undertaking with that indefatigable energy and perseverance which was displayed by the Spanish *conquistadores*.

He believed that, in order to further his projects, his best plan would be to seek pecuniary assistance from the *Audiencia* recently established in the city of Panama¹ and which exercised jurisdiction over the provinces of Tierra Firme, or Castilla del Oro, and of Río de la Plata, the Strait of Magellan, Nueva

¹ By royal decree of February 26, 1538.

Toledo, Nueva Castilla, or Peru, also of Río de San Juan, Veragua, the Duchy of Zorobará,² Nicaragua and Cartagena. Prior to the creation of that *Audiencia*, all these provinces were subordinated to the *Audiencia* of Santo Domingo in the Island of Española.

Unfortunately for him, Calero could not have knocked at a more inhospitable door. Doctor Don Francisco Pérez de Robles, the President of the *Audiencia*, he found to be at the moment interested in an expedition that was shortly to set out for the same purpose under the command of his son-in-law, Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz, for which reason, in the mind of the *Audiencia's* President, the highly colored accounts brought in by Calero concerning the richness of the country explored by him succeeded only in injuring his cause. Doctor Robles informed him that he had no money to give him, at the same time suggesting, however, that he had better associate himself with his son-in-law. Rejecting such a compromise, Calero requested a license, since he was denied pecuniary help, to recruit his force. To this, doubtless believing that he could not succeed, Robles assented; and the response to Calero's call for volunteers under the circumstances far exceeded his hopes, for it then transpired that there was no lack of stout-hearted

²The Duchy of Veragua.

men ready and willing to follow the flag of so doughty a leader. As soon as a number of these were assembled, he hastened to despatch an emissary to Rodrigo de Contreras, Governor of Nicaragua, to inform him of his discovery and put him on his guard against the projects of Robles and Hernán Sánchez, and further to ask the governor to send reinforcements to meet him at the Desaguadero while he himself was proceeding thence by sea with such force as he could get together.

The President, however, got wind of the message, and, fearful lest the Governor of Nicaragua should intervene, determined to prevent the communication, if necessary even by an abuse of power. A constable was ordered to seize Calero's envoy on the ship in which he had already embarked at Panama and take from him the missive. Not content even with this outrage, Robles resolved to stop at nothing. Having ordered the prosecution of the discoverer of the San Juan on the pretext that during his expedition he had caused the hanging of one of his soldiers, he confiscated the *fragata* and lateen-rigged vessel, and the remaining Indian burden-bearers, and concluded by issuing a further order committing Calero to prison.* This

* By royal decree of June 8, 1540, restitution of Alonso Calero's property was ordered.

was the sort of justice too often administered in America during that period in the name of the King of Spain. Calero contrived to avoid imprisonment only by taking sanctuary in the convent of San Francisco, at Nombre de Dios.

Whilst these arbitrary acts were being perpetrated against a man who had just rendered such important services to the monarchy, the preparations for the enterprise of Hernán Sánchez went forward with all despatch. The latter had signed a contract with Fray Tomás de Berlanga, Bishop of Panama (who had the authority therefor of the Vicereine of the Indies), for the conquest and colonization of the Duchy of Veragua, and entered into another agreement, with his father-in-law, the President of the *Audiencia*, also to engage in a similar undertaking in that part of the territory of Veragua which remained to the Crown,—that is to say, “from the boundaries of the Duchy of Veragua and Zorobará to Guaymura and Honduras and from sea to sea.”⁴ By virtue of that contract, and without consulting the King, Dr. Robles conferred on his son-in-law all the honors formerly enjoyed by Felipe Gutiérrez and still more, such, for instance, as the rank of *Adelantado* and Marshal of Costa Rica, the name by which they were beginning to designate the

⁴ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. IV, p. 70.

country in the official documents of the year 1589, wherein these events occurred.

Hernán Sánchez, a native of Badajoz⁵ and veteran of the conquest of America, was at that time a man of some fifty years of age but still resolute and full of vigor. Having arrived on the continent with Pedrarias in 1514, when still but a youth, he had figured in nearly all of the enterprises carried on during that epoch, particularly in the founding of the town of Acla, the cities of Natá, Nombre de Dios and Panama, and in the discovery of the mines of Veragua explored by Don Bartolomé Columbus during the last voyage of the great Admiral. Later, in 1526, he had gone with Pedrarias to Nicaragua on the punitive expedition against the rebel, Francisco Fernández de Córdova, and afterwards with Gonzalo de Badajoz when he undertook the re-settlement of Bruselas; he was at the latter place when for the second time the town was destroyed by Andrés Garabito. In 1529, he had marched with Martín Estete to the Desaguadero and to Suerre, contending against hardships with a resoluteness equal to that of such valiant captains as Gabriel de Rojas, Diego de Castañeda and the Bachelor of Arts, Francisco Pérez de Guzmán. After this he had returned to Panama, and in 1582 had gone to

⁵ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 744.

Peru with Don Diego de Almagro, who led an expedition to the assistance of Pizarro, reaching Cajamarca shortly after the imprisonment of Atahualpa. Afterwards he had gone with Pizarro to Jauja and was in the battle at that place, and, still later, in another fierce engagement in which Hernando de Soto and Juan Ronquillo were victors. He fought at the battle of Vilcas and had greatly distinguished himself at the taking of Cuzco. For his gallantry on that occasion, the King had granted him the privilege of adopting a coat of arms bearing a fortress and scaling ladder, for it was he who supported the ladder by which the escalade was effected.

Towards the end of 1538 he had returned to Panama laden with riches—the fruits of his campaigns in Peru. His ambitions in this respect thus satisfied, there awakened in his soul a longing for the honors that riches can support. So, in spite of his ripening years, he decided to court the Doña María de Robles, daughter of the President of the *Audiencia*—and from what the latter wrote the Cardinal of Sigüenza and the gentlemen of the Council of the Indies, it may be surmised that the money brought by Hernán Sánchez from Peru constituted a most effective inducement to the bestowal of the fair hand of Doña María. “I have already written to your Worship and to your Honors that I have given

one of my daughters in marriage to a *caballero conquistador* of these countries who comes from Peru and bears the name of Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz. He is of good descent, being noble on all sides of his family and of the pure blood; and, in addition to many other qualifications, is possessed of great wealth."

This man who was so graced by such excellent qualities did not even know how to read or write. In the course of a legal proceeding he is recorded as having declared himself unable to do more than write his name.⁶ In those heroic times, however, an *hidalgo* was not required to do as much as this; it was sufficient that he was able to conquer an empire for his King, as did Pizarro, and so on the 15th of February, 1540, with sixty Spanish soldiers and nine negro slaves, Hernán Sánchez sailed away from Nombre de Dios in a galleon and one barkentine, well supplied with munitions of war and provisions. Before leaving, he sent seven thousand *pesos* to Cape Verde with an order for more negroes, whom he destined to work in the mines he hoped to find in Costa Rica and Veragua. The bad condition of the sea prevented his approaching the coast for many days and the continually recurring hurricanes caused much damage to the

⁶ Declaration made by Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz in the lawsuit with Rodrigo de Contreras. León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, p. 241.

ships. At last he succeeded in disembarking on Escudo Island, where he awaited such improvement in the weather as would make it possible to remove to the mainland. This at last he was able to do, towards the end of April, and landed at the mouth of the Tarire or Sixaola River, where he founded the city of Badajoz and port of San Marcos.⁷

Sánchez de Badajoz was a soldier well trained in his profession. Having been brought up in the wars of the Indies, he knew that with such a small force it would be necessary to create a solid base of operations. He, therefore, at once set about strengthening his position and enclosing the city within a stockade of great tree trunks, for which he caused to be felled more than five hundred red trees. The soldiers, not appreciating the need of the precaution, began to murmur against the excessive labor it entailed, for it had been kept up without interruption even for the feast days so frequent in the Spanish calendar and so welcome to our race, but, as the Captain was blessed with a fist of iron and had, as it appears, a veritable arsenal of venomous shafts at his tongue's end, there was no recourse but to obey. In order to start the conquest, Hernán Sánchez awaited only the

⁷ Probably the 25th of April, according to Don Manuel M. de Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 745.

coming of two barkentines from Nicaragua that were to bring a certain Francisco Gutiérrez and a force of men, horses and provisions. For a like purpose he despatched his galleon to the Island of Jamaica.

While these important reinforcements were on their way, he ordered an expedition to proceed into the interior under the command of Captain Pablo Corzo, who on his return brought back some excellent samples of gold. As much for this reason as because, during the two months in which he tarried at the mouth of the Tarire, many of his unacclimated soldiers had been taken ill, he determined to remove to a site less unhealthful, and leave the sick, numbering some fifteen men, in the city of Badajoz. With the rest of his people he left for the valley of Coaza^s discovered by Pablo Corzo, and, induced by the picturesque, as well as strategic, position of the hill of Corotapa (which was situated two leagues from that valley and twelve leagues from the sea), undertook the building of another fort, and called it Marbella because from that point the view commanded the beautiful Almirante Bay. During his march he had three skirmishes with the Indians, but they did not succeed in

^sThe valley of Coaza, or Duy, was inhabited by a colony of Mexican Indians, and it is stated in a document of that period that they spoke Nahuatl. León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, p. 188.

killing a single one of his men. Hernán Sánchez, always the first in combat, as he was in the face of fatigue, did not lay down his arms day or night, in this following the example set by Cortés in the conquest of Mexico. If the necessity arose to cross a river or one of the deep marshes so abundant in that country, he did not hesitate to strip off his clothes and assist in the passage of his soldiers. With a chief so forceful and inured to the hardships of war, the little troop advanced with entire confidence.

Nevertheless, discontent reigned within its ranks and the murmurings broke out anew and with some violence when the soldiers were compelled to undertake the construction of fortifications at Corotapa. Because the great toughness of the wood and needle-like thorns rendered such a barrier impregnable to the Indians, the Captain ordered that the fort be encircled with trunks of the *pejibayes*,⁹ set closely together. Such a stockade was good even against Christians according to the statement of a witness.¹⁰ At the entrance were located several pieces of artillery and in the center Hernán Sánchez installed himself in a large house that had been used by the Indians as a burial place. The others took shelter in huts

⁹ *Guiljelma utilis*.

¹⁰ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, p. 256.

erected for the purpose, and then, ever forehanded, the Captain caused a truck garden to be laid out and had it sown with vegetables of Castile.

As soon as Sánchez de Badajoz arrived in the fertile valley of Coaza, which contained a considerable population, great fields of maize and *cacao* (the chocolate bean) and many *aguacate* (alligator pear), *mamey* (a sort of melon that grows on trees) and *pejibay* palm trees, he detached a part of his force in pursuit of the Indians, who had dispersed at his approach. Many were brought in, but, as the *cacique* did not come with them, Badajoz ordered a priest and another man to go in search of him. They were well received by Coaza and finally, at the end of a month, he repaired to Marbella, accompanied by some twenty of his lords, whereupon Sánchez de Badajoz, having learned by experience that the principal difficulty to be contended with in those parts was lack of food, detained him as a prisoner in the fort—a measure certain to result in securing from the Indians all the supplies that were needed. Nevertheless, he avoided falling into the error which had been fatal to so many other leaders, and treated the *cacique* with great kindness, placing him at his own table as a guest, and no stint was set upon the wine. This last was an attention for which the *cacique* showed himself

particularly grateful, and so offered his alliance against the lord of Tariaca, with whom he was then at war and who had killed his brother. These hostilities among the Indians were always of the greatest assistance to the Spanish in the conquest of America. Badajoz also captured Coxele and other chiefs and from them received gifts of golden ornaments valued altogether at six thousand *pesos*. Also, as the Captain had anticipated, the subjects of all the native rulers came in to render service and provisioned the fort with an abundance of maize, fruit, fowls, tapir meat and wild hogs. Under these conditions the conquest proceeded most auspiciously, and Hernán Sánchez was only awaiting the arrival of the reinforcements from Nicaragua and Jamaica to give it the magnitude he had planned, when Rodrigo de Contreras crossed his path.

Shortly after the departure of his son-in-law from Nombre de Dios, Dr. Robles had become convinced that Alonso Calero was no longer to be feared, and had restored to him the vessels and his other property. Meanwhile, Machuca de Zuazo, a man no less bold and enterprising than his companion, had at last arrived in Granada with the few exhausted men that remained of his command after his formidable march to the Yari River, and at once determined to return in search of his friend, of whose whereabouts he was igno-

rapt. Assembling a small force and manning fourteen canoes, he descended the San Juan to the sea, and, on his arrival there, explored the neighboring coasts, and encountered many difficulties and dangers until he succeeded in learning that Alonso Calero had reached Nombre de Dios. With this assurance of his friend's safety, he turned about and ascended the river into its upper waters—an undertaking his companions believed to be impossible—and, again entering Granada, was met by the news of the expedition of Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz and of the preparations the Governor of Nicaragua was making to expel him from territories which, according to the governor, belonged to him. This, however, was not the sole cause that impelled Rodrigo de Contreras to action; he wished also to revenge himself upon Dr. Robles, in the person of his son-in-law, for having sent a judge into the country from Panama to inquire into his administration. Such is the perversity of human affairs. What Rodrigo de Contreras had been unable to accomplish in loyal efforts to serve the King and obey the royal commands, he was now about to attempt on his own account under the inspiration of hatred and greed.

Machuca was far too useful an auxiliary to be ignored. No inducement or promise was omitted by the Governor to interest him in the enter-



DIFFERENT-COLORED STONES USED IN NECKLACES BY THE INDIANS.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

prise, and the Captain allowed himself to be persuaded and contributed largely to its organization. Among other things he placed at the disposition of Rodrigo de Contreras his soldiers and twenty-four of the thirty canoes he had taken with him. The flotilla sailed from Granada and started to cross the lake, though contrary to the advice of Machuca, who advised against a course too far from shore. The wisdom of his counsel events were soon to prove, for a hurricane almost wrecked the whole flotilla and nearly all the supplies were lost. It thus became necessary to put back, but the generous-hearted Machuca repaired the loss from the provisions of his own store, and, with the new supplies aboard, the voyage was resumed. This time the outcome was successful. Soon after the expedition began to descend the river, it came upon Alonso Calero, who was on the way up in his lateen-rigged boat, and who had set out into the interior of Nicaragua, it appeared, in quest of auxiliaries with which to continue his explorations, and for this reason had left his *fragata* at the mouth of the river.

Fully possessed of all the information he needed, and his greed excited by the reports brought in by Calero, Rodrigo de Contreras believed the opportunity a good one to rid himself by a single stroke of all those who were in a

position to interfere with his plans. Acting in the most flagrant bad faith, he stirred up dissensions between himself and the two men who had brought the San Juan undertaking to a successful end, and, with no plausible excuse, had Alonso Calero arrested and sent to Granada, where he languished in prison for three years. And this was the recompense of that forceful captain for the great services he had rendered. After the perpetration of this outrage, the Governor continued his voyage. First, descending to the sea, he went as far as the Suerre or Reventazón River, and there found in an abandoned hut a quantity of gold, valued at 600 *pesos*, which, with much more that he had robbed the Indians of, he sent to his wife through Mateo de Lezcano as a fund to be used in procuring more men and provisions, both of which had now become very meager.

On the 15th of November, 1540, he arrived before the fort of Marbella with ninety Spanish soldiers, some negro slaves and 400 Chichimeca Indians from Nicaragua. Among them were several women who did service as *vivandières*. Receiving news of the approach of this force, Hernán Sánchez despatched an *escribano* (notary) to Rodrigo Contreras to summon him to return. Though he was acting by virtue of a royal decree of the *Audiencia* of Panama con-

ferring on him the government of Costa Rica, Pedrarias' son-in-law (who treated such governmental orders with the same scant courtesy as did his defunct father-in-law) received the messenger with abuse and insult. Badajoz thereupon retired to his fort with the thirty-five men remaining to him, the rest having paid their tribute to the fevers of the swamp. Contreras laid siege to Marbella, surrounding it on all four sides, and stationed guards at the points whence the garrison made sorties for water. All who came out for this purpose were taken prisoners.

Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz was an expert and valiant soldier. Rodrigo de Contreras, on the other hand, was ignorant of even the rudiments of war. Furthermore the fort was secure and its artillery sufficient to warrant the risk of battle, with good chances of success. We must, therefore, credit the statement made by the besieged Captain when he refused to fight, that he did not wish to shed the blood of Spaniards. His conduct in Peru, where he consistently declined to take part in the fratricidal struggles that succeeded the conquest, only corroborates his statement.¹¹ It must also be taken into consideration that the strictness of his discipline, the severity with which he repressed the depredations of his soldiers, had alienated the good will of the

¹¹ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 744.

latter. In exchange, however, he enjoyed the affection of the Indians, with whom he was always affable and kindly. It is not strange, therefore, that desertions began to occur at Marbella with the arrival of Contreras, who at once applied himself to the encouragement of this desertion by promises and flattery. The garrison was finally reduced to six men, provisions were exhausted, the supply of water had completely failed. As a consequence, Hernán Sánchez was forced to surrender on the 1st of December, 1540. Rodrigo de Contreras placed him under arrest and ordered him to be shackled and bound with chains.

In these disputes between the Spanish leaders, the procedure varied but little. When one's rights were trampled upon, justice was sought through the medium of legal procedure. The very day Hernán Sánchez surrendered, an action was begun against him, initiated by his own *escribano*, Juan de Bastidas, at the instigation of Contreras. The charges contained in the complaint produced results of no importance with the exception of one relating to an unfortunate Indian woman who had been roasted alive at Corotapa as a human barbecue. According to Badajoz, the woman was a slave of Coaza's and it was that chief who had ordered it done, because she had attempted to escape. And this was probably

true, but, in any event, in permitting it, Hernán Sánchez made himself an accomplice in the horrible crime.

Though Rodrigo de Contreras had inherited from the conquered captain all the *caciques* he had held prisoners at Marbella, the Indians at large did not come in, as formerly, to render service, and consequently the provisions became more and more scarce. Some of the Indians mutinied and declared themselves in favor of their friend Hernán Sánchez; but Contreras, hearing of it, had them beaten into submission. When Coaza was questioned by the Governor concerning the incident, he refused to answer. He even went as far as to insult him in his own language.¹² Contreras thereupon had him thrust into chains, and, with menaces, tried to force him to make the Indians bring in food. This the *cacique* promised to cause to be done, but, when days passed and no provisions arrived, the Governor was enraged and called him a liar and impostor, then ordered a bonfire to be built and, seizing the *cacique*, was about to throw him into the flames; but the unhappy Indian gave vent to such piercing screams that the soldiers were moved to com-

¹² In September, 1541, a soldier by the name of Cristóbal Cansino declared at Panama that the *cacique* Coaza had said to him that Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz was a true gentleman, but that Rodrigo de Contreras was nothing but a *motolin*, which signifies "poor" in the Mexican language.

passion and prevented the perpetration of the outrage. Contreras cried out: "Let me burn this dog. If you don't let me burn him I will cast him out to be eaten by the dogs." Forthwith he had a particularly large and ferocious dog brought up and again was prevented from accomplishing his purpose. Later, when he was seeking to exculpate himself, Rodrigo de Contreras alleged that this was all a mere comedy.

Soon forced by necessity to change his tactics, he set about devising a plan to obtain provisions by some other means. To this end he gave Coxele his liberty and besought him to send in the Indians. As the *cacique* did not return, at the end of several days he sent for him. Coxele asked the messenger from whom he came, and, learning that it was from Rodrigo de Contreras, had him beaten and sent back word that if Hernán Sánchez needed him he would go at once, whereupon the Governor sent Captain Pablo Corzo in the name of Hernán Sánchez and immediately the *cacique* responded as he had offered to do. On finding himself in the presence of Contreras, however, he shielded his eyes so that he might not look upon him, which so infuriated the Governor that he ordered Coxele to be chained by the neck and led in leash like a dog to a place where the Indian had a plantation of yuccas. After a day's journey, the *cacique* was

asked by those who had him in custody whether the yucca plantation was still some distance away, and when Coxele said that it was he was cruelly beaten. They arrived at last at the plantation, but the following night the *cacique*, though bound by his chain to a tree, succeeded in making his escape and afterwards aroused the country to revolt, for he was a very important chief in those parts.

Then, exhausted by hunger, the Chichimecas cut down the *pejibay* trees in order to eat the *palmitos* (pith) and this greatly displeased the natives, who held them in high appreciation, because their fruit served them for food and provided them with a refreshing beverage. An expedition made up of twelve men, sent out in search of maize, was attacked and put to rout by the infuriated Indians. Four Spaniards were killed, among them the leader, Damián Rodríguez—the same who accompanied Calero on his voyage of discovery to the river San Juan. On this occasion many of the Chichimeca burden bearers also met their deaths. Parenthetically, it is a fact worthy of note that two of Hernán Sánchez' soldiers who had fallen wounded in the attack were not only spared by the Indians but were given food and had their wounds cared for. But as though these misfortunes that have already been related were not enough, the galleon

sent to Jamaica was wrecked on its return and all on board, together with the horses and supplies, were lost—and, further, when the sick men who had been left at the city of Badajoz heard of the surrender of Marbella, they hastened their recuperation in preparation for flight, and sacked the place of all property left there by their captain.

Also parenthetically it may be observed that the starvation that menaced Contreras' camp in no wise interfered with the progress of the prosecution of Badajoz, which was ably conducted by Salvador de Medina, an *escribano* who had fled from Mexico under charges of forgery. Nor was there any lack of witnesses ready to placate the victor by testifying against their discredited chief. The gold, jewels and other property of the accused, to the value of more than fifteen thousand *pesos*, of course instantly found their way into the hands of Rodrigo de Contreras. Of no avail was it for the unhappy Hernán Sánchez to cry out from his prison: "They are robbing me in the town! There is no justice for me!"—it was like a voice in the desert.

With matters in this condition, the Chichimecas, by this time satiated to the point of disgust with their diet of *palmitos*, determined to seek something more substantial and soon found it

in the form of a small boy, a son of one of Coaza's chiefs. This tidbit they conscientiously proceeded to roast after the fashion of a barbecue, and then eat in conformity with the pleasant custom of their race. At this last outrage, Coaza's people, who were already incensed because of their having cut down the *pejibay* trees and other depredations they had committed, were now terribly indignant. Resolving to make reprisals, under cover of night they fell upon the quarters of the cannibals, killed forty of them, besides a negro slave, and alarmed Contreras' entire camp. The latter cast the blame for the occurrence on Hernán Sánchez, accusing him of having caused an uprising of the Indians through the medium of Pablo Corzo. Whether this was true or not, it was alleged in the judicial proceedings that followed that Coaza, angered against the Governor for having seized his two favorite wives and turned them over to the negroes and footmen, had incited Badajoz to kill the Christians, offering to join with his subjects in putting an end to the Chichimecas.

Convinced at last, however, that it was no longer possible to sustain himself in Corotapa, Rodrigo de Contreras broke camp and removed to Tariaca, where a part of his command was already located. His idea was to establish an understanding with the *cacique* of that name who

was a pronounced enemy of Coaza, for he believed that for this reason that chief would receive him well. Nevertheless, the first thing he did on his arrival was to make him a prisoner and maltreat him. Because they had begun to make claim to their share of the six thousand *pesos* which the *caciques* had given their captain, he also caused to be arrested nearly all the soldiers of Hernán Sánchez and menaced them with threats. At first, when he was trying to gain their good will, Contreras had offered to turn this money over to them; later he promised them clothes, and trinkets with which to traffic with the Indians, but, when the soldiers saw the gold start on its way to Nicaragua, they began to doubt the promises of the son-in-law of Pedrarias.

Among the prisoners was Captain Pablo Corzo, who, according to the gossip of the soldiers, on the night before the coming of Contreras, had buried two bags of gold belonging to himself and four more that were the property of Badajoz. Under the pretext that the King's fifth must be separated from this treasure, the Governor had Pablo Corzo questioned concerning its hiding place, and, Corzo having insisted that he knew nothing about the matter, determined to reach his ends by the means of a machination. He ordered a cross-bowman named

Moreno to propose to the prisoner a means of escape on the condition, however, that the treasure be temporarily abandoned, and that in order to accomplish the escape they should conceal themselves in the neighborhood for a while and then make their way to Nombre de Dios, from which place they could return later in a boat and secure the gold. This proposal of the crossbowman it was currently stated about the camp Pablo Corzo accepted. In any event, the fact remains that he did make his escape—whether it was connived at or not—and that he hid himself near by, for he could not alone have gotten very far away in so hostile a country. Contreras thereupon made a great hullabaloo, declaring that the story of the treasure was true and that they would see that Pablo Corzo would soon return; and thus it happened that the following night this same Moreno and one Cerdán, whom the Governor had left on guard, found him hidden in the camp behind some demijohns, and under torture Corzo not only confessed that he had the gold but gave directions to the place where it could be found.

Fifteen days later, Rodrigo de Contreras, with Pablo Corzo, forty soldiers and the treasurer of Nicaragua, Pedro de los Ríos, set out in search of it. When they had reached the place indicated, on the banks of the Tarire River, near Corotapa,

thirty leagues from the camp, Corzo recanted, saying that he had absolutely no knowledge of the gold; that his statement had been made in the terror caused by the torture, and that, even if they were to sentence him to be killed if he should not tell, he could give them no better information. On hearing this, Contreras ordered that his feet should be roasted before a fire. Crazed then with pain, the unhappy man cried out to them to stop the torture and he would take them to the spot where the gold was buried. Having then conducted them to the hill of Corotapa, where they saw the remains of Marbella fort, which had been burned and destroyed by the Indians, he confessed with groans, when interrogated again, that he knew nothing of the gold and had told what was not true to avoid further torture. The ferocious Rodrigo de Contreras then ordered him to be hanged; but after his victim was already half dead, cut the rope and caused him to be resuscitated. When Corzo had regained consciousness, he was asked for the last time to tell where the gold had been concealed. He answered finally that he knew nothing about it and begged them to put an end to his torment, which was done.

Such were the works of Rodrigo de Contreras, an illustrious *caballero* of Segovia, a man



J. L. F. ...

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born of the highest nobility.¹³ Of this tyrant the historian Fernández de Oviedo speaks in laudatory terms.¹⁴ Bancroft does the same and even goes so far as to commend him as a just and humane Governor.¹⁵ With an estimate now true to life, Don José D. Gámez shows him in a much less favorable light when he states that "he was execrated by all in Nicaragua."¹⁶ So also does Don Tomás Ayón in relating that there were lodged "against him the gravest accusations."¹⁷ Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas accuses him of be-

¹³ Rodrigo de Contreras was descended from Diego González de Contreras, *corregidor* (correctional magistrate) of Segovia, and of Doña Angellina of Greece, a lady of the royal house of Hungary, formerly a slave of Bajazet I, who was taken prisoner, with the Sultan her master, at the battle of Ancyra by Tamerlane. This famous conqueror sent her as a gift to the King of Castile, Don Enrique III., who in his turn gave her for wife to the *corregidor* of Segovia. *Cartas de Indias*, p. 142.

¹⁴ "From the time Rodrigo de Contreras arrived in that country, he exercised his office as a good governor and maintained in peace and justice the countries and provinces committed to his charge by His Majesty, and procured the conversion and good treatment of the Indians to the end that they might be brought to a knowledge of God." Oviedo, Book XLII, chap. XIV.

¹⁵ "His conduct is at least in strong relief with that of his two predecessors, and, apart from certain accusations brought against him by the ecclesiastics—with whom he was ever at variance—the annals of his time portray him as a just and humane ruler. He at once began the task of establishing law and order in his territory, thus gaining the confidence of the settlers, and all traces of evil wrought by the absconder Castañeda were speedily effaced." Hubert Howe Bancroft—*History of Central America*. Vol. II, p. 170.

¹⁶ José D. Gámez—*Historia de Nicaragua*, pp. 160-170.

¹⁷ Tomás Ayón—*Historia de Nicaragua*, Vol. I, p. 228.

ing the principal cause in Nicaragua of all the disturbances that occurred.¹⁸

Hunger and sickness at last, however, forced Rodrigo de Contreras to give thought to retreat. Before turning back, he condemned Hernán Sánchez to be deported to Spain. The order appears to have been signed at Doybabarú in Tariaca on the 5th of March, 1541. During the retreat, the Indians made an assault on the expedition, killed many of the Chichimecas and wounded several Spaniards, among them Captain Diego de Castañeda. On his arrival at the city of Badajoz, the Governor was called upon to repel a second attack, and at that place took ship, leaving behind a small garrison under the command of Castañeda, though it was not long before the soldiers mutinied and took flight in the barkentines Rodrigo de Contreras had left behind. On his return to Nicaragua, on a sandy beach at the mouth of the Desaguadero, the Governor founded the town of San Juan de la Cruz, known to-day as San Juan, or Greytown,

¹⁸ "In truth, I hope in our Lord that the new Bishop of Nicaragua (Fray Antonio de Valdivieso) will do great things in the service of God and of Your Majesty in that province of Nicaragua; it is one of the most shameless and misguided, as well in what concerns God as in the matter of justice, that can be found in these Indies, for it is overrun with evildoers and tyrants and given over to tumult and riot; and the principal cause of all the disturbance—although there is no lack of

and appointed as *alcalde* (mayor) one Gabriel de León.

The *cacique* of Tariaca died in prison. Coaza, carried far from his native land, wasted away with homesickness at Badajoz. The unfortunate Hernán Sánchez, who by concealing them in his portfolio, had succeeded in saving from the clutches of Contreras several ropes of pearls and a few ingots of gold and silver, to the value of 2,000 ducats, was unlucky enough to lose these last of his resources during the final march. An Indian youth from Nicaragua, the sole servant remaining to him, found the famous portfolio and escaped with it, accompanied by one of Coaza's women, of whom he was enamored.

In execution of the sentence rendered against him at Doybabarú, Hernán Sánchez was put aboard the caravel of Martín de Bonilla at the mouth of the Taure, under the custody of Diego de Contreras—and in such a state of wretchedness and nakedness that Rodrigo de Peñalosa had compassion on him and made him a present of a shirt and some velvet slippers. Finally, as though all the misfortunes he had already suffered were not enough, there was loosed upon his head the wrath of the Crown, hurled against

bad Christians—is said to be Contreras." *Cartas de Indias*; Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas to the King, written from the city of Gracias á Dios, November 9th, 1545.

him in no less than five royal decrees.¹⁹ With great vigor the King expressed his disapproval of the conduct of Dr. Robles for having, against his express orders, placed in the hands of his son-in-law the conquest of Costa Rica, and ordered Hernán Sánchez, under pain of the most severe punishment, to quit the country. The Vicerine of the Indies also complained against him, though without reason, for he had not set foot within the Duchy of Veragua. In April, 1542,²⁰ Rodrigo de Contreras arrived in Valladolid, bringing the papers in the case against Badajoz, and shortly afterwards the Council of the Indies ordered the latter to be confined in prison. Here, bowed down with adversity, four years later he died.

But seven or eight of the soldiers of Hernán Sánchez escaped with their lives; of those who followed Contreras, thirty-five, and more than three hundred of the famous Chichimecas, met their deaths.

What a deplorable sacrifice of life upon the altar of greed!

¹⁹ León Fernández—*Documentos para la historia de Costa Rica*, Vol. IV, pp. 87, 88, 101, 104, 105.

²⁰ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 746.

CHAPTER X

DIEGO GUTIÉRREZ APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF ROYAL VERAGUA, OR CARTAGO—HIS CONTROVERSIES WITH RODRIGO DE CONTRERAS—THE EXPEDITION TO SUEÑE—THE TOWN OF SANTIAGO—THE HISTORIAN GIROLAMO BENZONI—THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO—THE RAPACITY OF DIEGO GUTIÉRREZ—THE CACIQUES CAMAQUIRE AND COCORÍ—THE UPRISING AND CONFEDERATION OF THE INDIANS—THE DEFEAT AND DEATH OF DIEGO GUTIÉRREZ AT TAYUTIC

1541-1544

WHILE blood was being spilled and many iniquitous crimes committed in the contest for possession of Costa Rica, the sovereign disposed of the province by bestowing it on an outsider who had not been involved in the disputes, and thus flouted the ambitions of both Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz and Rodrigo de Contreras.

A brother of Felipe Gutiérrez, named Diego, to whom the catastrophe to the founder of the ill-starred colony of Concepción had not served as a warning, wished in his turn to try his fortune along the perilous road of adventure. Presenting himself before the King he offered, at his own expense, to conquer and colonize the ter-

ritory remaining to the Crown in Veragua, outside the twenty-five leagues pertaining to the Duchy.¹ The proposal was accepted by the monarch. On the 29th of November, 1540, Diego Gutiérrez was named Governor and Captain-General of a province the boundaries of which, beginning with the limits of the Duchy, ran from sea to sea and extended to the Río Grande,² to the west of Cape Camarón in Honduras, with the exception only of such territories as had been committed into the charge of governors other than himself. The appointment was for life, with succession to his heirs, and to the office was attached an annual salary of 1500 ducats, with another fifteen hundred for expenses. Besides this, the agreement entered into with the King bestowed upon Diego Gutiérrez the office of *Alguacil mayor*³ and the lieutenancy of a fortress, and contained the promise of a grant of an estate of sixteen square leagues and a title of nobility. The new province was given the name of Cartago in the stead of its ancient name of Veragua.⁴

¹ Don Manuel M. de Peralta has given to this territory the name of "Veragua Real" (Royal) to distinguish it from Veragua Ducal.

² The Román or Aguán River.

³ Equivalent to high sheriff in England. *Translator*.

⁴ "Cartago is a province whimsically so called by the first Christians who resided there." Oviedo, Book XXX, chap. 1. The first province known by the name of Cartago was situated

Diego Gutiérrez was poor and the father of a numerous family. Nevertheless, he succeeded in providing himself with the resources necessary to arm and fit out a splendid ship, and set forth on his venture accompanied by "caballeros and nobles and a retinue of great brilliance, although small in numbers."⁵ Arriving at the city of Santo Domingo on the 5th of June, 1541, he met and talked with the historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, who was his friend, and showed himself to be animated by the best of intentions towards the Indians. That author says of him that he was "a man of choice diction and high breeding."

On the 5th of August, with a well-equipped force of two hundred men, he set sail from Santo Domingo in the ship brought from Spain and a barkentine. The latter he had purchased on the island together with a caravel, which was to follow him in October with a supply of horses and other necessities for his expedition. At Jamaica the soldiers mutinied and he was forced to proceed with a mere handful of faithful followers. Finally he reached Nombre de Dios, only to be overtaken by a serious illness, and from that point, profiting by the opportunity so afforded,

on Caratasca Lagoon, to the west of Cape Gracias á Dios. León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 573, note (a).

⁵ Oviedo, Book XXX, chap. I.

the small force remaining to him set out for Peru.

There was abundant excuse in misfortune such as this for abandoning an undertaking so ill-starred in its beginning, but the far-famed Veragua, which it would seem had already exacted a sufficient toll of life, appeared to exercise a strange fascination for all who dreamed of her. Diego Gutiérrez was no exception. Undismayed by the disloyal flight of his force, he determined to push forward. With but four or five men he embarked for Nicaragua, the Atlantic coast of which was embraced within the limits of his government, ascended the San Juan River in a *fragata*, and, once within that province, made friends with a Portuguese by the name of Francisco Calado and with one Alonso de Baena, a Madrileño like himself, who had grown rich in Peru. These two newly acquired friends loaned him the several thousand *pesos* he needed to enable him to undertake the conquest and settlement of Cartago.

It was with not a little disgust that Rodrigo de Contreras noted the arrival of a new competitor—for Gutiérrez was one he dared not arrest or despoil as he had Calero and Hernán Sánchez, since not only did he come armed with royal decrees,⁶ conclusive in their terms, but Contreras

⁶The royal decree of January 11, 1541 (León Fernández, *Documentos*, Vol. IV, p. 103) commanded that the boundaries

knew that he possessed powerful backing at court. Contreras started a controversy over the boundaries of their respective governments, nevertheless, alleging that his rights had been violated with reference to the possession of the San Juan River, which he claimed had been discovered and explored as far as the sea by the Captains Machuca de Zuazo and Alonso Calero. With this as an issue, he presented a claim that resulted in a judgment of the Council of the Indies of the 16th of March, 1541, modified by that of April 9th of the same year, wherein it was provided that Diego Gutiérrez should have the right to enter the river, establish settlements, and make allotments of land on both banks, on the condition, however, that colonization should not be carried on in places where Rodrigo de Contreras and his captains should first have made settlements, and that in no case should Gutiérrez be permitted to establish himself within fifteen leagues of the lake, or to go upon the lake, or within said fifteen league zone.

These rivalries obliged Diego Gutiérrez to remain in Nicaragua nearly two years, when he finally made peace with the governor of that province through the mediation of the Bishop, and was, therefore, at last enabled to get to- of Diego Gutiérrez' government must be respected on pain of death and confiscation of property and provided that all who violated those limits would be prosecuted as traitors.

gether a small force with which it was his purpose to commence the conquest of his future domain. Seeing him thus determined, Rodrigo de Contreras, who had had opportunity to judge of the effectiveness of the method employed by Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz, advised Gutiérrez to follow his example in some ways, but not wholly. After painting in most somber hues the awesome country he was about to traverse and recounting the disasters that had attended many of the captains who had gone before—not the least of them being those that had befallen Gutiérrez' own brother Felipe—Contreras predicted that he would not succeed in conquering the domain, for the reason that it was impossible for him to make his way afoot, much less on horseback, because of the denseness of the forests and the impassable mountain crags. He urged that if he wished to accomplish his purpose, it would be better for him to take up a position on the coast, with a hundred men or so, and, whenever the rains permitted, make raids on the Indian villages and carry off the gold that was to be found there in great abundance. Contreras on his part agreed to undertake to supply provisions and other necessities, always with the understanding that they were to share in the spoils.

The proposal was one that was in every way worthy of Contreras. Gutiérrez, however, a

novice in conquest, replied that the King had commanded him to colonize, not to plunder, and that he trusted in God to send him a better fate than that suffered by his predecessors. Beautiful words! But, unfortunately, they were but mere words, as we shall see further on. Oviedo was right when he wrote that "this governor was better qualified in speech than in judgment for the burden he carried."

Diego Gutiérrez left the city of Granada toward the end of 1543, with a force of sixty men. Setting sail in two barkentines, he reached the sea via the Desaguadero, and steered for the Suerre River. On his arrival at the mouth, he ascended the stream some six miles, and in its upper waters found a group of deserted huts in which he quartered his men. The place he christened Villa de Santiago, bestowed upon it a municipal council composed of Captain Pedro Ruiz, Juan García Pacheco, García Osorio, Francisco Calado, Luis Carrillo de Figueroa and Alonso de Baena, and at once wrote the King under date of the 22nd of November, 1543, informing him of the founding of the town and requesting of his Majesty an appointment as Governor of Nicaragua. One of his first acts was to issue a proclamation commanding all, on pain of a hundred lashes, to give to his government the name of Cartago and Costa Rica instead of

Veragua. This doubtless was in order to avoid disputes with the heir of Columbus.

When Gutiérrez was fully installed in the town of Santiago, he received a visit from several Indian chiefs, who, having become familiar with the course pursued by the Spaniards in their country, brought with them as gifts a number of articles made of a low grade of gold and amounting in value to seven hundred ducats. The Governor showered attentions upon them, and, wishing to demonstrate also his own generosity, gave to each a crown, worked in glass beads, hawks' bells and other trinkets, and then, after explaining to them by the sign language that he had no other object in coming among them than to show them the way to salvation, interrogated them as to the source from which they obtained their gold. The Indians told him the gold came from a great distance and was found in the streams. Finally the chiefs returned to their own villages and for a time continued to send provisions into the town.

Desirous as the Captain was to pursue his exploration, the heavy rains for a considerable period made it impossible. As he was compelled to remain at Santiago, the provisions brought from Nicaragua were at length exhausted and hunger began to manifest itself in the appearance of all—that terrible hunger of Veragua,

the hunger that had conquered Columbus, Nicuesa and Felipe Gutiérrez before. As an expedient, the Governor applied to his friends the *caciques* for a small supply of maize, since it had now become possible to undertake the expedition into the interior. The Indians, who were impatient to rid themselves of such inconvenient guests, readily complied, but the provisions they sent in were so limited in quantity that the Spaniards, as they thought, would be forced to quit the country. At this the soldiers, observing the sinister aspect matters had assumed, and remembering the dark fate that had attended all the other *conquistadores* in Veragua, resolved among themselves to desert, and one night escaped to the sea and reached the coast near the mouth of the river San Juan, where they were picked up by some vessels bound for Nicaragua from Nombre de Dios. With the Governor only his nephew, Alonso de Pisa, four servants and one of the sailors remained.

Yet, although Diego Gutiérrez thus found himself abandoned a second time, he adhered to the resolution he had formed on the first occasion to make his way into Nicaragua, and, as he clung to the hope of returning, he left hidden in the ground at Santiago some vessels containing salt and honey, then descended the river in a *fragata*. As he was about to leave port, unexpected as-

sistance arrived in the form of a barkentine, bringing a force of men and laden with supplies and provisions sent out from Nicaragua under the command of Captain Barrientos. Great was Gutiérrez's joy. Welcoming the new arrivals effusively, he overwhelmed them with attentions and promises, and resolved to remain in port until the return of his nephew, Alonso de Pisa, whom he had despatched to Nombre de Dios for recruits.

The gold that had been given him by the *caciques* he had entrusted to his nephew as a fund with which to enlist the men and to purchase the supplies. This very gold was later to prove the knife that was to rend their own throats. Alonso de Pisa succeeded in assembling at Nombre de Dios some twenty-seven men. Among them was the Milanese Benzoni, who afterwards bequeathed to us a most interesting narrative of the adventures of Diego Gutiérrez. Towards the middle of 1544, Pisa left in the barkentine for Suerre and arrived four days later, but, prevented from entering the river by the unfavorable condition of the bar, put back and sought refuge in Almirante Bay, where, among the islands, he remained for seventy-two days awaiting the quieting down of the sea. These islands, having been abandoned by the Indians in their effort to escape the frequent in-

cursions of the Spaniards, were then uninhabited and it was impossible to find anything to eat. In the emergency, Alonso de Pisa resolved to reconnoiter the mainland, and, after a fruitless quest of eight days, over mountains and morass, decided to return to the coast and follow the beach to Suerre. It was only after having undergone great hardships that he succeeded in reaching it. The barkentines did not put in an appearance until twenty days later.

When the reinforcements had arrived, Diego Gutiérrez provided his nephew with a quantity of gold which, when melted down at Panama, produced 1500 *castellanos*, and despatched him again to Nombre de Dios in the same vessel, for the purpose of procuring more men. Without awaiting his return, being now well provisioned with turtle meat and fat, Gutiérrez proceeded to the upper waters of the river with the *fragata* and four big canoes, on the 4th of October reaching the Suerre territory, situated some thirty miles from the coast. Here he found a large oval-shaped structure, built of cane and thatched with palm leaves most skillfully braided, which served as the abiding place of the *cacique* when he came down to the river to fish. In this house he took up his residence and gave the settlement the name of the city of San Francisco.

Soon afterwards the lord of the Suerre country

and the chiefs of Cuyupa and other head men made him a visit and brought in gifts of fruit. Gutiérrez received them well, though he could not conceal his disappointment over the fact that grateful as were these gifts to the palate, they were not accompanied by gold, which, needless to say, would have rendered them more appetizing. Nevertheless, he availed himself of the occasion to tell the chiefs, through the medium of a soldier who knew a little of the language of the country, that the purpose of his coming was to bring them great consolation. Farther along we shall see what kind of consolation this was. Then, perhaps wishing to imitate Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz, he invited them, with the chaplain of the expedition⁷ and the interpreter, to dine with him. It is to be supposed that the Indian chiefs were unable properly to appreciate the fowls and salt pork served that day at the table of the Governor and Captain-General, for little or nothing did they deign to eat. Indeed, they bestowed on their servants, who were assisting at the banquet, seated about the table on the floor, all that was placed before them, and the ser-

⁷It is stated in certain documents of that period that this priest bore the name of Francisco Bajo. Juan Vázquez de Coronado (*Peralta—Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 781) writes to the King, in 1563, that Fray Martín de Bonilla "came out as chaplain of Diego Gutiérrez' 'armada,'" but he did not form part of the expedition to Suerra.

vants, less discreet than their masters, tossed it to the dogs, making sport of the food provided by the illustrious envoy of the monarch of Spain.

At the end of the feast, Diego Gutiérrez concluded that the moment had arrived wherein to favor them with a brief post-prandial discourse, which Benzoni has preserved to posterity. "My dear friends, I have come to your country," he said to them, "to lift you from the idolatrous abyss into which, until now, you have been plunged by the artfulness of Satan. It is my purpose to teach you the true course for the salvation of your souls and to tell you how our Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, descended from heaven and came upon the earth to redeem mankind." He added that the priest who was there present had come from Spain with the sole object of instructing them in matters pertaining to the faith and the Christian religion, and that they must prepare themselves to submit to the divine law and render obedience to the Emperor Charles V., King of Spain and monarch over all the world. Of this entire discourse it is not too much to surmise that the Indians comprehended not a word. They made no response whatever; they simply confined themselves to bowing their heads as though saying "Amen" to it all, and then returned to their homes.

The day following, the Governor sent a messenger to the *caciques* Camaquire and Cocorí—the same who had presented him with the 700 ducats and supplied him with provisions at the town of Santiago—requesting them to come and see him, and sending them assurances that they could do so without fear of harm. Both obeyed the summons but, as they did so with ill grace, Diego Gutiérrez, violating his plighted word, made them prisoners and had them chained by the neck, and, this outrage consummated, demanded of them that they return the salt and honey he had left buried at Santiago. They replied that this was a matter they knew nothing of, and that there had been no need to take what they already had in great abundance. The Governor thereupon launched forth threats and abuse and, for greater security, caused the prisoners to be tied to the feet of his bed and to sleep on the floor. Camaquire, who was the younger of them, and reputed to be very rich, had his people bring in two thousand ducats' worth of jewels and gold. This sum was not enough to moderate the greed of the Governor. He menaced them daily with demands for more gold, and when at last he concluded that it was not forthcoming, ordered a bonfire to be built. The Governor then had Camaquire brought out where he could see the flames, and, showing him a large

basket, told him that unless within four days he should have produced gold enough to fill it six times over, he would have him burned alive. At this, thoroughly terrorized, the unhappy Indian despatched his slaves with orders to bring back all the treasure they could find.

But it happened that, as the imprisoned *caciques*, like all the Indians of those parts, were accustomed to bathing several times a day, a trusty servant of the Governor's was charged with the duty of taking them to the water; that, after returning from the bath the afternoon of the day following the threat of torture by fire, this servant left the door of the prison insecurely fastened, and that, during the night, Camaquire managed to make his escape. So violent was Gutiérrez' anger and disappointment when he saw thus fading away the heaps of gold of which he had dreamed, that he became sick, and, when his eye fell on the famous basket, exclaimed, in a delirium of rage, that he had been defiled by its touch. Cocorí, however, still remained in the Governor's power, and on him fell the weight of his wrath.

Only this *cacique*, more manly than his companion, did not allow himself to be intimidated by threats. He would not give up any gold, he replied with great firmness, because he had none to give. Exasperated by the answer, Gutiérrez told Cocorí that in default of his delivering a

certain sum, he would have him torn to pieces by his dogs. To this the Indian replied with scorn, and called the Governor a boastful liar because of his repeated threats to kill and his failure to carry them out. He told Gutiérrez that in visiting him he had come with faith in his assurances, confident that he would be well received and not submitted to such outrage; he could not imagine, he said, what sort of people these Christians could be who wherever they went committed so many evil deeds. Greatly surprised at hearing such bold words, and perhaps ashamed of his own baseness, Gutiérrez contented himself with replying that he held the *cacique* prisoner because he was a thief, since he had stolen the salt and honey.

Thoroughly incensed against the Governor's cruelties and exactions, the *caciques* of Suerre, Cuyupa and many others burned their villages, cut down their fruit trees and escaped into the forests, taking their crops with them in order to deprive the Spaniards of all means of subsistence. Six Indians whom Gutiérrez had despatched in a canoe to the port of Suerre to bring up the arms and other supplies he had left there, deserted on their way back and carried off the entire cargo. To make matters worse, Alonso de Pisa failed to put in an appearance and the soldiers, again finding themselves confronted by starvation, began to murmur, and for a second time tried to make



WAR MACE HEADS.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

their escape. In this unfortunate predicament, Gutiérrez made the desperate resolve to plunge into the woods in pursuit of the Indian confederates. Having first distributed among his forces the scant supply of provisions that remained, reserving the best for himself, and having sent the sick back to the port, with orders to follow him as soon as Alonso de Pisa should arrive—promising that he would take the precaution to blaze his trail through the woods by cutting marks on the trees—he broke camp and directed that Cocorí's Indians should carry the baggage on their shoulders.

When the *cacique* saw that he too was destined to be turned into a burden bearer, he began to cry like a child, and assured the Governor that if he would but restore his liberty, he would return within four days with a large quantity of gold. It would seem, therefore, that this cruel indignity struck greater terror to the soul of the *cacique* than even the threats of torture and death, for in the face of these he had not shown the slightest fear. The noble conduct of the Indian only makes the methods of those who so ruthlessly maltreated his race seem all the more odious—a people surely more worthy than its tormentors. The Governor, it would appear, was at first inclined to let Cocorí go, but he was unfortunately surrounded by some who were

more evilly disposed than himself. These men advised against it, cautioning him that the *cacique* was not to be trusted, and arguing that as long as the Indian was kept prisoner his people would continue to bring in provisions. They urged, instead, that it would be better to send a force to sack his village and thereby both augment their food supply and secure additional burden bearers. This was counsel that Gutiérrez had no lack of desire to follow, yet he dared not order the depredation to be undertaken lest the men he might assign to it should desert!

Instead, Diego Gutiérrez and his companions pursued their course for five or six days, following the Indians through the dense forest that covered the vast level plains of Santa Clara, until they arrived at the Central Cordillera. With much difficulty they crossed the mountains by way of the eastern slope of the Turrialba volcano, from the heights of which they could view the Pacific. In the passage over the high and rugged ridges they came upon not a single habitation. Continuing their descent, they reached a broad, torrential river which proved to be the same Suerre or Reventazón River whence, in its lower waters, they had recently taken their departure. On its bank they discovered some abandoned huts containing the bones of many wild animals.

Here also were many *xapote* (sapota) trees and fields of yucca that served most effectively to allay the hunger of the Spaniards. At this place they remained two days, taking a much needed rest, and then continued their march. Three days later they reached a point from which the trail they had been following⁸ branched out in two directions. Diego Gutiérrez asked one of the Indians which of the two paths would lead them to some village, and, the Indian having replied that he did not know, immediately had him beheaded by the two negro slaves he had brought with the expedition. The same question was then put to Cocorí, who also answered that he did not know, whereupon Gutiérrez commanded that he also be put to death. When he heard himself sentenced, the *cacique* laid down his burden and, with admirable stoicism, bowed his head and, without a tremor, awaited the stroke. Moved at last by such grandeur of soul, the barbarous Spaniard stayed the hand of his slave and granted the heroic Indian his life. Not knowing which road to take, therefore, Gutiérrez camped for the night where he was. Here he left behind three men who had become exhausted by fatigue and afterwards were killed by the Indians.

Wholly selfish and hard of heart, and following

⁸The itinerary followed by Diego Gutiérrez corresponds exactly with the old trail used by the Guetare Indians and those from the Suerre country in their intercommunication.

the example of his brother, Diego Gutiérrez withheld from the famished soldiers the food he had set apart for his own consumption. In order to keep life in their bodies, the men were forced to subsist on roots. In connection with this great scarcity of food, Benzoni relates an amusing anecdote. After two days' march, the expedition reached the borders of a forest, where they discovered some Indian scouts who took flight on their approach, but the following morning a large number of Indians, painted in war colors, black and red, suddenly fell upon the Spaniards with hideous cries and a great noise of war horns and tom-toms. Diego Gutiérrez, who at the moment had separated himself from the camp, was the first to be killed. Like good Spaniards, the soldiers defended themselves with courage, forcing back the Indians and killing many, but the latter were reinforced and enabled to resume the offensive, and this time their adversaries could offer but slight resistance, so weakened had they become by hunger and fatigue.

The battle did not last ten minutes. Of more than forty men who accompanied Diego Gutiérrez, one half met their deaths, among them the two negro slaves. With much difficulty and hardship the rest escaped through the woods. A few—and with these was Benzoni—returned by the trail over which they had come. During



SPANISH CONQUISTADOR.

their retreat, they ran into a body of twenty-five *caciques* and leading Indian men, each wearing over his shoulders a mantle. Yet, though armed with lances, the Indians bore no war paint. The fugitives broke through the groups of chiefs and,



running a short distance farther, came up with the Padre Francisco Bajo, who, with two soldiers, had succeeded in making his escape at the beginning of the combat. Two hours later they met Alonso de Pisa coming to their support with a force of twenty-four men. In the midst of the account they were giving him

of the disaster and the death of his uncle, they were suddenly surrounded by more than a hundred Indians, carrying swords, bucklers and cross-bows—the trophies of their victory. Exulting over the Spaniards, the Indians danced about, some calling out derisively in Spanish: “Here is gold, Christians! Come and take it!” But, seeing the reinforcements that had been brought by Alonso de Pisa, they did not dare to attack.

Diego Gutiérrez was defeated and killed in the month of December, 1544, at Tayutic or Teotique, a place situated in the valley of Tayut.⁹ Twenty years later Juan Vázquez de Coronado heard a report that the *cacique* of Suerre, one of those Indians who had confederated, still preserved the spoils of the expedition.¹⁰ The Indians cut off the head, feet and hands of the Governor and his two negro slaves; the other bodies were abandoned on the field. After great hardship and much cruel suffering from hunger, the remaining Spaniards succeeded in reaching the coast at the mouth of the Taure River and from thence set forth for the interior of Nicaragua.

Such was the awful end of a rapacious and inhuman governor.

⁹The valley of Tayut runs between the villages of Tuís and Chirripó and is the one which now bears the name of the valley of Platanillo.

¹⁰Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 302.

CHAPTER XI

DIEGO MACHUCA DE ZUAZO AND ALONSO CALERO MAKE APPLICATION FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF COSTA RICA—JUAN PÉREZ DE CABRERA APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF CARTAGO, OR VERAGUA—THE SUBMISSION OF THE CHOMES AND ABANGARES INDIANS—THE COMMISSION OF ALONSO ORTIZ DE ELGUETA—THE LICENCIADO JUAN DE CAVALLÓN AND THE PADRE JUAN DE ESTRADA RÁVAGO—THE AUDIENCIA OF GUATEMALA APPOINTS CAVALLÓN ALCALDE MAYOR OF NICARAGUA AND EMPOWERS HIM TO ENGAGE IN COLONIZATION AND DISCOVERY IN THE PROVINCE OF NUEVO CARTAGO AND COSTA RICA—THE PADRE ESTRADA RÁVAGO AT BOCAS DEL TORO—THE TOWN OF CASTILLO DE AUSTRIA—THE DOWNFALL OF ESTRADA RÁVAGO—CAVALLÓN'S INVASION FROM THE PACIFIC—THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY OF GARCIMUÑOZ, THE TOWN OF LOS REYES AND PORT OF LANDECHO—THE CONQUEST IS EXTENDED AS FAR AS THE ATLANTIC SLOPE—CAVALLÓN'S HARDNESS—THE GOODNESS OF ESTRADA RÁVAGO—DEPARTURE OF CAVALLÓN—THE PADRE ESTRADA RÁVAGO IS MADE LIEUTENANT OF THE ALCALDE MAYOR

1545-1562

ON the 30th of July, 1545,¹ a few months after the tragic death of Diego Gutiérrez, Captain Machuca de Zuazo, in his own behalf and that of his friend, Alonso Calero, presented himself before the Royal *Audiencia* of Los

¹M. M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 752.

Confines,² located in the city of Gracias á Dios, and made application for the government of Costa Rica, with the same emoluments and under the same terms as had been enjoyed by Gutiérrez. The *Audiencia* forwarded the petition to Madrid for submission to the Council of the Indies, before which it was warmly supported by the Bishop of Nicaragua, Fray Antonio de Valdivieso.³ The Crown, however, was bound by a contract with the heirs of the Governor of Cartago (of sinister memory), so the Council limited its action to referring the petition to the Governor's son, Don Pedro Gutiérrez de Ayala, under date of the 14th of September, 1546.

Three years passed, during which Gutiérrez de Ayala came to no decision in the matter. Thereupon the King called on him for fulfillment of the conditions agreed to by his father, and Gutiérrez then elected, according to his right under the contract (of 1540), to subrogate Juan Pérez de Cabrera, a resident of Cuenca—"a gentleman of noble birth,

² The *Audiencia* of Panama was superseded in 1542 by that which was erected to reside at the boundary line of Guatemala and Nicaragua in 1543. That *Audiencia* exercised jurisdiction over the provinces of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Chiapa, Yucatán, Cozumel, Higueras, Cape Honduras and all the other provinces then existent up to the province of Tierra Firme or Castilla del Oro, inclusive, and consequently over the province of Costa Rica as well.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 754.



**FRAY ANTONIO DE VALDIVIESO, BISHOP OF NICARAGUA
AND COSTA RICA.**

From a painting in the Episcopal Palace at San José de Costa Rica.

possessing a rich entailed estate, and with good family connections in these kingdoms" ⁴—and ceded to the latter nearly all his rights, reserving to himself merely a small part of the income and lands pertaining to him under the royal grant.

Juan Pérez de Cabrera was a man of much experience in the conquest of the Indians, having been Governor and Captain-General of Honduras during the two years that intervened between the death of Pedro de Alvarado and the arrival of the *Adelantado* Francisco de Montejo.⁵ The King accepted the substitution and conferred on Pérez de Cabrera the governorship of Cartago, or Veragua, on the 22nd of February, 1549, together with the office of *Corregidor* of Trujillo in Honduras. Shortly afterwards Cabrera set forth from Spain in two ships, taking with him five hundred men and the necessary supplies, and finally reached Honduras. When, however, he started to put his enterprise in motion, he encountered serious difficulties in the *Audiencia* of Guatemala,⁶ which exacted of him strict compliance with the King's command ⁷—

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁵ M. M. de Peralta—*Exposé des droits territoriaux de la République de Costa-Rica*, p. 50.

⁶ This *Audiencia* was identical with the *Audiencia de los Confines* whose residence had been removed from the city of Gracias á Dios to the city of Guatemala in 1550.

⁷ By virtue of the New Laws and Ordinances promulgated by the Emperor Charles V. at Barcelona on the 20th of November, 1542.

that his work of conquest be carried on humanely and not by fire and sword as he had planned. Confronted by this severe restriction, the successor of Diego Gutiérrez abandoned the undertaking, and, by way of indemnification for the expense to which he had been put, the *Audiencia* bestowed on him the government of Honduras.

The rights of Don Pedro vanished with Juan Pérez de Cabrera's abandonment of the enterprise, and many years passed before anything was attempted again in the territory of Costa Rica, whose great riches, widely proclaimed ever since the time of Columbus, remained thus hidden away in the mysterious solitudes of its immense forests and rugged mountains. In 1554, as a result of the rebellion of Francisco Hernández Girón in Peru, the *Audiencia* of Guatemala appointed Pedro Ordóñez de Villaquirán *Corregidor* of Nicoya and of the ports of Chira and Paro, in order to "guard and defend that district," which was then considered as the frontier of Peru,⁸ and through which in fact many adventurers were accustomed to pass on their way out of that country. Villaquirán was not called upon to draw his sword against the rebels, but, during the two years he remained in Nicoya, he received the voluntary submission of the Chomes

⁸ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VII, p. 138.

and Abangares Indians,⁹ in exchange for a few church ornaments he bestowed upon them. In this connection, he sent in to the *Audiencia* an enthusiastic report concerning "the great riches in gold the people of Veragua possessed."

This report, when transmitted to Spain, had the effect of calling attention once more to a country reputed to be of great wealth but which had hitherto shown itself to be unconquerable. The result was a commission, issued on the 13th of December, 1559, to the *Licenciado*, Alonso Ortiz de Elgueta, whereby he was appointed *Alcalde mayor*, with instructions to secure the submission of the Indians "unenlightened by the faith" who might be found "between that Province of Nicaragua and the Province of Honduras, on the side of the cities of Nombre de Dios and Panama, between the North and South Seas." Afterwards, however, Philip II., for reasons not specified, declared that it was not to the interest of his royal service that Ortiz de Elgueta should proceed with the projected expedition.

There was living in those times, in the city of Santiago of Guatemala, a young lawyer,¹⁰

⁹The Chomes and Abangares Indians inhabited the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, in territory embraced in the present province of Puntarenas. Both names are still preserved in that province.

¹⁰In 1559 Cavallón declared that he was thirty-five years of

native of Garcimuñoz, a small place in Castilla la Nueva, who was a man of merit, ambitious and courageous, and who desired to devote his energies to some profitable employment. He was called Juan de Cavallón, and was married to a lady of quality, Doña Leonor Barahona, who was a daughter of Sancho Barahona, a veteran of the conquest of Yucatán, Mexico and Guatemala. Cavallón had come to America with the armada of Juan Pérez de Cabrera, under whose orders he served as Deputy Magistrate in Trujillo in the year 1550, and later, from 1558, as *Alcalde mayor* of Nicaragua. In the latter employment he greatly distinguished himself, particularly during the uprising of Juan Gaitán.

Gaitán, after having sacked the town of San Miguel, in San Salvador, as well as the town of Jerez, in Choluteca, and the so-called mines of Juan de Avila, had determined to proceed against León and kill the *Alcalde mayor*, against whom he desired to revenge himself for a certain punishment the latter had inflicted on him for an offense committed in Nicaragua. Cavallón, advised of the plot in due season by a negro slave, who had succeeded in making his escape from the

age, more or less. Cleto González Viquez, *Apuntes sobre geografía antigua de Costa Rica I—Castillo de Garcí Muñoz*.



STONE ALTARS OF THE GUETARES.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

rebel camp, had resolutely prepared for defense. Expecting to surprise the city, Juan Gaitán and his followers had made their entrance at day-break on the last day of the Easter season, in 1554, but were met by the *Alcalde mayor*, who had assembled the citizens in the plaza, fully armed and prepared for defense. Here they had engaged in a vicious combat, which ended in the complete rout of the rebels. Cavallón had been wounded in the head and had received a lance thrust in his thigh. The victory gained, he had immediately ordered the hanging of Gaitán, his ensign and quartermaster and ten or twelve of the lesser chiefs, and had the hands of four cut off. Nearly all the rest of the rebels had been made prisoners.

The lawyers attached to the *Audiencia*, who were friends of Cavallón and knew from this and other incidents in the career of their colleague that he was an expert with the sword as well as in respect of the codes of law, proposed that, since he had declined to accept a position in the *Audiencia* of Nueva Galicia in Mexico, he should undertake to carry through the mission that had been entrusted to *Licenciado* Ortiz de Elgueta having in view the conquest and colonization of Costa Rica. Cavallón was an ambitious man and was eager to undertake the adventure, but,

at the outset, he was deterred by the serious difficulty arising from his extreme poverty,¹¹ for, according to the custom of the period, the conquest must be made at his own expense. It happened, though, that at that very time a good friend of the *Licenciado* also found himself in difficulties—difficulties, however, of a different nature, and which resulted greatly to the advantage of Cavallón.

For shortly before, the King had ordered that all decloistered friars should leave the Indies, and the Padre Juan de Estrada de Rávaro, as an old Franciscan, was on the point of returning to his natal city of Guadalajara, in Spain, by order of the Bishop of Guatemala, Don Francisco Marroquín. The Padre, who had well feathered his nest in America, and was of an adventurous spirit, availed himself with pleasure of the opportunity presented to remain, and, on the advice of this same Bishop, associated himself with his friend Cavallón. Resolving, therefore, to risk in the enterprise his private fortune, which amounted to some six or seven thousand *pesos*—

¹¹ See León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VII, p. 434, for the letter written by Cavallón to the King on the 7th of April, 1556, in which he says: "I am poor and in debt and possess absolutely nothing wherewith to sustain myself; my fortune consists solely of my hope of preferment at the hands of your Majesty." In 1558 he writes again to the sovereign—"As for myself, I must acknowledge that I am poor and in debt." León Fernández—Manuscript now in possession of the author.

the fruits of his service as curate in San Juan de Puerto Caballos, Gracias á Dios, in Honduras, and in several places in Guatemala, the matter was thus arranged. The *Audiencia*, without awaiting further orders from the King, a second time appointed Cavallón *Alcalde mayor* of Nicaragua and authorized him, under date of January 30, 1560, to undertake an expedition of discovery into the Province of Nuevo Cartago and Costa Rica, prescribing for him the same boundaries that were established for Ortiz de Elgueta, since they pertained to the same enterprise. These dispositions of the *Audiencia* were confirmed by the Crown on the 5th of February, 1561.

With some companions, and supplies for their venture, Cavallón and Estrada Rávago left Guatemala in the beginning of 1560. They were accompanied, among others, by Sancho and Juan Barahona, brothers-in-law of Cavallón, Ignacio Cota, Alonso Guillén and Diego de Trexo. As soon as they arrived in Nicaragua, they began their preparations and the enlistment of soldiers in the cities of León and Granada, and, as in conformity with instructions given them by the *Audiencia* they were to establish settlements as well along the Atlantic as the Pacific, they concluded to divide the expedition into two commands. It was planned that the Padre Estrada

Rávago should set out by sea to establish a city at the port of San Jerónimo, or Bocas del Toro,¹² while Cavallón was to enter the country overland by way of Nicoya, on the coast of the Pacific. Each was to penetrate into the interior from his own side until they should meet, as nearly as possible, in the center of the country.

Estrada Rávago, who received later the title of Vicar-General of Costa Rica, left the city of Granada in the month of October, 1560, embarking on the lake in two *fragatas* and some canoes, well supplied with arms, munitions of war and provisions, and having in his company seventy Spanish soldiers, some negro slaves and many Indian burden-bearers, making a total force of 300 men. Although the Padre was the real head of the expedition—having by a document, executed on the 22nd of September, 1560, been fully empowered by Cavallón to represent him in that capacity—it was thought that it would not look well for a priest to serve as the actual leader of a military force. For the sake of appearances, therefore, a certain Mérida was appointed lieutenant to the *Alcalde mayor* and quartermaster, and to Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa, a man of importance in Nicaragua, was entrusted the royal standard, in his capacity of senior ensign.

¹² Almirante Bay.

From the events that ensued, still farther are we led to the conclusion that a sinister fate attended all those who sought to conquer the territories that in the beginning went by the name of Veragua, and towards which the Padre Estrada Rávago, following in the footsteps of Columbus, Nicuesa, Felipe Gutiérrez, Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz and Diego Gutiérrez, now directed his course. The disasters suffered by these leaders had become legend, as had those of Cristóbal de Peña, Don Francisco Columbus and Juan Fernández de Rebolledo, who also failed or lost their lives in the chimerical conquest of the Duchy. In his passage over the lake the Padre received the first onset of ill fortune. One of the *fragatas* nearly foundered in a hurricane and the greater part of the cargo was lost. Descending by way of the Desaguadero or San Juan River, the expedition on reaching the sea met with more mishaps. The other *fragata* ran aground on the bar at the mouth of the river, its cargo was lost, and those who manned the vessel were nearly drowned. Thus, as already seen, the adventure commenced badly, and not only that—there were not lacking superstitious ones in the company who attributed their misfortunes to the intervention of the Padre, whose presence they looked upon as an evil omen.¹⁸

¹⁸ Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 200.

The stranded vessel was soon afloat, however, and Estrada Rávago set sail in one of the *fragatas*. The command of this he reserved to himself; the other he placed under the command of Anguciana de Gamboa. Without further mishap, he reached Bocas del Toro, or Almirante Bay, where he disembarked, immediately set up landmarks to record the taking possession of the territory, caused some huts to be erected, and proclaimed the foundation of the city of Castillo de Austria, endowing it with the customary powers and requisites. This done, he sent one of the *fragatas* to Nombre de Dios with his silver tableware, negro slaves and some articles of personal use, with instructions that they be sold, and that with the proceeds a supply of the provisions so sorely needed in the newly created city be purchased; and at the same time he availed himself of the opportunity to write to the King to inform him that the Crown of Spain possessed one more city in its American dominions.

While the letters from Estrada Rávago and the *Cabildo* (Municipal Council) were making their way over the seas to the Court, hunger (the inseparable companion of the Spaniards on the coast of Veragua) made itself cruelly felt in the city of Castillo de Austria. The moment soon arrived in which there remained no recourse but

to do what all the *conquistadores* had been accustomed to do in this emergency: search out the Indian villages and rob them of their supplies of food. The Padre Estrada Rávago surely would not have resorted to such an expedient except in the last extremity, for he was a good man and tender-hearted, as on other occasions was often proved. Twenty-five soldiers who went forth in search of maize were attacked by 300 Indians, armed with bows and arrows, spears and round shields. One of the Spaniards was killed and seven wounded, and they were forced to take refuge in a hut. From this point of vantage they were able to make use of their arquebuses and succeeded in putting the Indians, who were terrified by the detonations, to flight. The expedition then returned to Castillo de Austria with the small quantity of maize they had succeeded in collecting, and later, with reinforcements given them by the Padre, returned to the interior; but the Indians had disappeared, after having burned their houses and fields of maize.

In view of the fact that the *fragata* sent to Nombre de Dios had not returned; that many of the Indian burden-bearers had perished; that, to satisfy their hunger, his people had consumed everything, including the dogs, and were reduced for sustenance to herbs and reptiles; that they went about naked in the incessant rains—

Estrada Rávago concluded to abandon such a site for his city and to reestablish it at the port of Suerre.¹⁴ Doubtless this was in order too that he might be nearer Nicaragua. The resolution taken, he went aboard the *fragata* that remained to him, with all who could be crowded into it, and ordered the rest to follow along the beach. These last, however, seeing how badly things were going, improved the opportunity to desert.

In the Suerre country, the city of Castillo de Austria had no better fate. The Padre was not long in determining to abandon this also and return to Nicaragua. In the port of San Juan, where a number of invalid soldiers died on his hands, he was succored by a bark bound from Nombre de Dios, and at once sent a canoe up the river to seek help in the interior of the country. At León, Bishop Carrasco heard news of the state of dire necessity to which the Padre had been reduced and went immediately to Granada, whence he sent him provisions. These, however, arrived too late, for Estrada Rávago had already left San Juan for Nueva Jaén, from which place he removed some time later to Granada, with some thirty men, sick and exhausted, of whom several afterwards died.

¹⁴ Called to-day *Parismina*.

Thus ended this new attempt at colonization on the coast of the ancient Veragua, which had then become known by the names of Cartago and Costa Rica—that is, all except the ancient Duchy, which was converted into a royal province in the same year 1560, under the name of the Province of Veragua. Lacking the means necessary to pursue his undertaking on the Atlantic, Estrada Rávago decided to set out in search of his partner, who was leading his expedition of conquest along the Pacific side. By royal decree of the 4th of August, 1561, the King sent him his thanks for the founding of the city of Castillo de Austria, when that settlement was no more than a memory—and, to those who had been its inhabitants, a nightmare!

The *Licenciado* Cavallón, having sent a small force in advance, had left Nicaragua in January, 1561, and passed along by Nicoya. From here he continued, always by land, as far as Chomes, where the Indians had been at peace since the time of Pedro Ordóñez de Villaquirán. He had with him ninety Spanish soldiers, several negro slaves who had offered to accompany him, and a large quantity of provisions and munitions of war, also a number of horses, cows, goats, pigs and other animals. It was these domestic animals that became the progenitors of those that exist in Costa Rica to-day. At Chomes he came

up with the vanguard and divided his force into four detachments. The Senior Ensign, Ignacio Cota, was given command of the first, Juan Gallego of the second, and Miguel Sánchez de Guido of the third. The command of the fourth, Cavallón retained for himself. This done, he began his march into the interior, opening roads with great difficulty until he arrived at a favorable site for making camp. To this he gave the name Real (Camp) de la Ceniza.¹⁵ From his headquarters here he despatched Juan Gallego to the valley of Garabito.¹⁶

This expedition got as far as the valley of La Cruz,¹⁷ where it encountered such a considerable body of Indians that Gallego resolved to turn back and send for Cavallón, who came up with the rest of the force. As soon as the *Alcalde mayor* arrived in the valley of La Cruz, he despatched the Portuguese Major, Antonio Alvarez Pereyra, to look for the Coyoche valley, of which he had heard. Pereyra discovered it, and, having brought back the *cacique* of that country as a prisoner, the latter's subjects came

¹⁵ According to León Fernández (*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 101) this camp was located on the left bank of the Machuca River above its confluence with the river Jesús María.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* On the right bank of the Río Grande and to the east of the Cuarros River.

¹⁷ On the coast near the Cuarros River. Doctor Don Bernardo Augusto Thiel—*Datos cronológicos para la Historia Eclesiástica de Costa Rica*.

into camp to proffer their services. Cavallón gave to the valley of Coyoche¹⁸ the name of Landecho,¹⁹ and, with the help afforded by the Indians, was enabled to continue his march into the interior, where, in the last days of March, 1561, he founded the city of Garcimuñoz²⁰ on the plains of Turrúcares on the left bank of the Ciruelas River.

Some little time after the settlement of the city of Garcimuñoz, he also founded the city of Los Reyes on the plains of Santo Domingo, which to-day bears the name of Orotina, and the port town of Landecho on the little bay of Tivives.²¹ Up to the present time, all who have written concerning the history of Costa Rica²²

¹⁸ The *llanuras* (vast level plains) of Santo Domingo.

¹⁹ In honor of the President of the Audiencia of Guatemala, Don Juan Martínez de Landecho.

²⁰ Cleto González Víquez—*Apuntes sobre Geografía antigua de Costa Rica*. Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 790. The first cabildo or municipal council of Garcimuñoz was composed of Juan de Illanes de Castro, Francisco Juárez de Grado, Diego Caro de Mesa, Miguel Sánchez de Guido, Ignacio Cota, Juan González de Badajoz, Pedro Mejía and Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa, the last named being the same who accompanied Estrada Rávago on his ill-starred expedition to Bocas del Toro.

²¹ Don Cleto González Víquez, in his studies of the ancient geography of Costa Rica, has positively located the port of Landecho in the bay of Tivives.

²² Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 790; *Exposé des droits territoriaux de la République de Costa-Rica*, p. 66; León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 101; Cleto González Víquez—*Apuntes sobre Geografía antigua de Costa Rica*; Francisco Montero Barrantes—*Elementos de Historia de Costa Rica*, Vol. I, p. 35; Bernardo Augusto Thiel—

make it appear that the founding of the town of Los Reyes and of the port of Landecho was prior to the founding of Garcimuñoz; this, however, is an error which a study of the documents referring to the question instantly corrects. Thus, for example, in a judicial inquiry instituted at Cartago, in 1568, at the instance of the *cabildo* of that city, the witness Alonso Hernández de Guido testified that when he arrived in the province of Costa Rica the town of Los Reyes had not yet been settled—that only the city of Garcimuñoz²³ had been founded. Even more positive than this is the report made by Juan Barahona, a brother-in-law and companion of Cavallón, concerning his services, in which he states that the town of Garcimuñoz was the first to be founded in the province of Costa Rica.²⁴ Cavallón was probably obliged to continue his use of Chomes in communicating with Nicaragua until the consideration of the convenience of having a shorter road between Garcimuñoz and the coast induced him to adopt the port of Tivives, or Landecho. At all events, it is a fact that it was not until after the conquest of the Provinces of Coyoche, Garabito, Pacaca, Cur-

Datos cronológicos para la Historia Eclesiástica de Costa Rica; Joaquín Bernardo Calvo—*Apuntamientos geográficos estadísticos é históricos*, p. 200.

²³ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. IV, p. 461.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. VII, p. 254.

rirabá, Tiribí and Yurustí, that Cavallón laid the foundations of the town of Los Reyes and the port of Landecho.

As has been stated above, the territory of Costa Rica was but sparsely inhabited; the Indians sowed maize only to the amount that was necessary for their own immediate needs, and they were, therefore, unwilling to share it with outsiders. Cavallón was unwise in establishing the city of Garcimuñoz on the sterile *llanuras* (flat plains) of Turrúcares, swept as they were by the east winds and far removed from the sections populated by the Indians. It was, therefore, extremely difficult to provision the city, it being necessary to cover great distances in search of food supplies, and in many instances to take them by force from the Indians, who naturally tried to defend them. As Cavallón carried a heavy hand, hostilities soon broke out between the invaders and the legitimate proprietors of the land.

Antonio Pereyra made an excursion to Pacaca,²⁵ where many Indians fell into his hands, among them Quizarco, a brother of Coquiba, the principal *cacique*. Cavallón caused Quizarco to be beaten and thrown into chains. Ignacio Cota, at the head of another expedition, crossed the Cordillera and discovered the cen-

²⁵ The ancient village of Pacaca, known to-day as Tabarcia.

tral plateau, the Guarco valley where to-day lies the city of Cartago, and the hamlets of Co, Ujarrací, Orosí, Corrosí and Ibuxibux. This expedition passed through enormous hardships.

Again Antonio Pereyra left Garcimuñoz to go in search of Garabito, that cunning and turbulent old *cacique*, who was the principal leader in the resistance to the *conquistadores*. This Garabito, so called in memory of Pedrarias Dávila's lieutenant,²⁶ who had visited his dominions thirty-six years before, was the king of the Guares of the West, and his elusiveness is not hard to understand, for he could not have retained very agreeable recollections of the Spanish. Profiting by his experiences, he caused a false Garabito to impersonate him. This counterfeit was taken prisoner with many men, women and children. Among the captives figured one of the favorite wives of the real *cacique*, who, to prevent her becoming a victim of ill treatment, detailed later a number of his subjects for service in the city of Garcimuñoz.

On Good Friday, the 18th of April, 1561,²⁷ Cavallón despatched Miguel Sánchez de Guido with twenty-five men to proceed to the village of Orosí, situated at a great distance on the

²⁶ The Captain Andrés Garabito.

²⁷ See González Víquez—*Apuntes*.

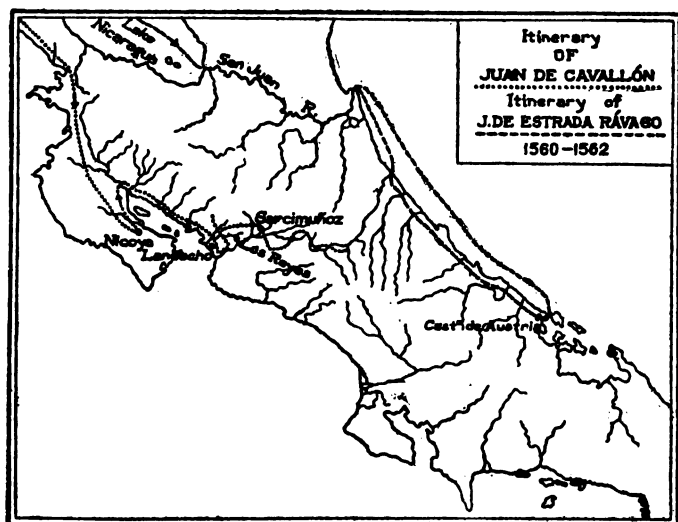
slopes of the Atlantic, in search of maize. The *cacique* of the place made him welcome and bestowed on him a large quantity of grain, asking nothing in return, and during the twenty days that the Spaniards remained in the place, Guido sent to Garcimuñoz many consignments. At the end of this period, he determined to return to the city with the balance, but, on the morning of the day fixed upon for beginning the march, and while the greater part of his soldiers were still in bed, cries of alarm were heard coming from a negro slave who had been sent to fetch water. The Indians had come to attack the Spaniards in their sleep. Thanks to the diligence and fearlessness of Sánchez de Guido, who sprang upon a horse and held them back with blows from his lance while the soldiers were arming themselves, his force was saved from extermination, and the Spaniards managed to make their escape with the maize, though many came near falling into the hands of the Indians, who killed several of their horses.

On their side, the *caciques*, and, in particular, Garabito, harried the Spaniards as they could. Luis Díaz Trexo, on his way from Nicaragua with his wife and children, was assaulted and robbed on the road by Garabito's band. Ignacio Cota set out with twenty-five men to punish the outrage. Arriving at the scene of the attack, he

proceeded to the valley of La Cruz. Here he captured two native women, who told him that the Indians who attacked Trexo had gone on to the port of Landecho to kill the soldiers stationed there. Cota started by forced marches to the help of his compatriots. Later, he directed his course toward the valley of Coyoche, in which he arrived at the end of three days. There he found Juan de Illanes de Castro, who was out on a foraging expedition with a small force in search of maize. He remained in the valley for a short rest and then continued his march, shortly coming upon three hundred Indians who had joined forces for an attack on Castro. Cota put them to rout, but several of his soldiers came out of the fray badly wounded.

These hostilities and depredations, and Cavallón's inhumanity towards the natives, excited their hatred. It happened also that Quizarco and the counterfeit Garabito succeeded in making their escape from Garcimuñoz with the chains that bound them, thus further inciting the uprising, which then became general. The situation in which the Spanish found themselves grew more and more precarious, for they lacked everything. In this state of things, Cavallón received advices from Guatemala that the King had appointed him *Fiscal* (Attorney General) of the *Audiencia*, and as a consequence, dis-

illusioned as he doubtless was concerning the far famed riches of Costa Rica, and being without money wherewith to continue the conquest, he preferred to abandon it and return to the bosom of his family. As he was a man of great per-



sonal courage, he proposed to set out alone for Nicaragua; but Captain Diego Caro de Mesa succeeded in persuading him to accept his escort, with three picked soldiers—a circumstance that saved his life, for, in an unguarded moment, he was attacked by Garabito at the head of a large number of Indians and escaped only with great difficulty,²⁸ to arrive in Guatemala poorer and

²⁸ Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, pp. 362, 372;

more heavily in debt than when he left. Shortly after this he was transferred to Mexico in the same employment, as *Fiscal* of the *Audiencia*, and there he died some years later.

Meanwhile on the 9th of March, 1562, the Municipal Council of Garcimuñoz wrote to the King recommending the appointment of Cavallón as Governor and *Adelantado* of Costa Rica and for the appointment of Estrada Rávago as Bishop. Cavallón had set out from Costa Rica in January, 1562, leaving, as his lieutenant in the *Alcaldía Mayor*, the Padre Juan de Estrada Rávago. He named Juan de Illanes de Castro as his lieutenant in the *Justicia mayor* (Chief Justiceship) and military affairs were left in the hands of two captains: Ignacio Cota for the Atlantic slopes and Antonio Pereyra for the Pacific. After a lapse of several months, Estrada Rávago, accompanied by Anguciana de Gamboa and a few others, had rejoined Cavallón, bringing with them from Nicaragua horses, cattle, provisions and clothing, which he generously distributed among the soldiers. With the goodness of heart natural to him, he applied himself immediately to the task of repairing the evils done by Cavallón and in a short time gained the affection of the Indians, who through love for the

Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles—*Nobiliario de Conquistadores de Indias*, p. 66.

Padre came voluntarily to offer their services to the city. Rávago built churches and furnished them with chalices, ornaments, altars, bells and other requisites for worship, all out of his own funds, and took up with apostolic enthusiasm the preaching of the gospels. The Indians were no longer despoiled of their food supplies, for Estrada Rávago supplied the Spaniards with maize that was bought. Twice he went in person to Nicoya to procure provisions and clothing for the citizens of Garcimuñoz, on both occasions at great risk of his life as a result of violent storms in the Gulf. The second voyage was particularly perilous; his canoe overturned and he spent four hours in the water clinging to the fragile boat.

His exemplary life, the sweetness of his character, his generosity and Christian virtues attracted all who had dealings with him; he became as well beloved by the Indians as by the Spanish.²⁹ In a letter written by the Franciscan Friars in 1572, after Estrada Rávago had returned to Spain, it is stated that the province could not console itself for his absence, for all, as well the Spaniards as the Indians, had looked upon him as a father. The letter goes on to say that the Indians said among themselves that if he should not return to Costa Rica, they would

* Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa states that many times he saw Estrada Rávago give his own shirt to the poor people.

never submit or pay tribute, that the Spaniards had forced the Padre to leave Costa Rica because of the great love borne him by the Indians.³⁰ In another letter of the same year, addressed to the King, Philip II., these same brothers said that the Indians adored the Padre and would have died for him; that after Estrada Rávago had left Costa Rica, two of the richest provinces revolted. They prayed that if possible he be sent back,³¹ but these and other efforts in favor of Estrada Rávago were without result.

Beside that of Cavallón, who was a man hard and cold, the figure of the Padre stands out in a most attractive light: a curious mixture of monk and conqueror, but unblemished by the defects and vices of either personality—a character better synthesized as that of a warrior apostle. Only his inclination to acquire worldly possessions can be charged against him, and even this charge should rest lightly when it is considered that he acquired nothing by violence, and that he gave freely of all that he had. Judging him solely as a *conquistador*, and from the point of view of results achieved, it must be confessed that Cavallón was the greater, because he succeeded in establishing Spanish dominion, in permanent form, over a large part of the territory of Costa

³⁰ Peralta—*Ibid.*, p. 458. This letter is dated on the 25th of January, 1572, and addressed to Fray Diego Guillén.

³¹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VII, p. 210.



PHILIP II.

Painting by Titian, in Museum of the Prado, Madrid

Rica—from the borders of the Gulf of Nicoya to the village of Corrosí, on the slopes of the Atlantic, while Estrada Rávago failed completely in his attempt at colonization on the coasts of that ocean. But it must also be taken into account that circumstances were much more favorable for Cavallón. On the Pacific slope the climate was much more benign, provisions were not so scarce and the natives more numerous and less warlike. It must also be considered that the Padre had from the first to contend against ill fortune which brought him two shipwrecks and the serious hardships that resulted from his being far removed from Nicaragua, the base of operations for both expeditions.

Estrada Rávago governed the province for a few months, and there is reason to suppose he entertained the hope that he would be definitely confirmed in his government; but this hope was dispelled. The Padre was not in sympathy with Cavallón's successor, Juan Vázquez de Coronado, with whom he was soon on bad terms, and, in January, of 1563, he retired in disgust to Nicaragua. In their correspondence there may be found traces of mutual ill will. In a letter written on the 20th of January, 1563, by Vázquez de Coronado to the President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, the *Licenciado* Landecho, he says: "The Padre Juan de Estrada is

much annoyed with me, and with reason, because I have not informed your worship of his restlessness and uneasiness. Up to the time he left the country there were many troubles in it.”⁸² On the 2nd of July of the same year Vázquez de Coronado writes in regard to this to Philip II.: “Your Majesty has been informed of the founding of Castillo de Austria; but the settlement survived only a short time the announcement of the event, for the place was at once abandoned by the settlers because of the superficial work of their chief.”⁸³

On his part, but with greater charity, the Padre Estrada Rávago speaks in these terms of his rival, Vázquez de Coronado, in a letter he wrote to Fray Diego Guillén from Guadalajara, in 1572: “The first account His Majesty and his Council received concerning that province” (Costa Rica) “came from me, and His Majesty replied commanding me to proceed with the work commenced and stating that my services would be taken into account. So I did what I was ordered to do, until Don Juan Vázquez de Coronado came to Spain and was appointed *Adelantado*. Whether he obtained this through the medium of a true relation or not our God now knows and he will already have rendered

⁸² Ricardo Fernández Guardia—*Cartas de Juan Vázquez de Coronado, Conquistador de Costa Rica*, p. 22. Barcelona, 1908.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

Him an account of the matter.⁸⁴ May God in His mercy keep him in glory; Amen.”⁸⁵

The rivalry explains itself. It is most natural that Estrada Rávago, after having been the head of the province and after having given so generously to it in labor and money, should not look with favor on one who had come to supplant him. In 1565 he went to Madrid, but was unable to realize his ambition of becoming Bishop of Costa Rica. The year following the death of Vázquez de Coronado, he went back to the province with Anguciana de Gamboa, and in 1570 again repaired to court, in the capacity of *Procurador* (attorney) of Costa Rica. He took with him rich specimens of gold for the King,⁸⁶ which was always an excellent means of obtaining one's desires, though again he failed to obtain any advantage for himself or for the province. Finally, wearied and disillusioned, he retired and went to live in Guadalajara, the place of his birth.

The documents relating to Cavallón and Estrada Rávago are very scarce. Not a single letter in the shape of a narrative has been found.

⁸⁴ Estrada Rávago alludes here to the death of Vázquez de Coronado.

⁸⁵ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. III, p. 1. In this same letter he says that in Costa Rica he had in his possession a nugget of gold twenty-two carats fine that weighed six hundred *pesos*, and that he had seen an Indian cutting firewood with a golden ax.

⁸⁶ Peralta—*Ibid.*, p. 799.

CHAPTER XII.

JUAN VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO SUCCEEDS CAVALLÓN IN THE ALCALDÍA MAYOR OF NICARAGUA AND IN THAT OF NUEVA CARTAGO AND COSTA RICA—PREPARATIONS FOR CONTINUING THE CONQUEST—WAR IS DECLARED AGAINST THE CACIQUE GARABITO AND HE IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH—VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO ESTABLISHES FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE GÜETARES CACIQUES—THE EXPEDITION TO QUEPO AND THE DEFEAT OF MARMOLEJO AT COTO—THE FORTIFICATIONS OF THE COTOS; CHARACTER AND CUSTOMS OF THESE INDIANS—THE RETURN OF VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO TO GARCIMUÑOZ—SUBMISSION OF THE GUARCO CACIQUES—CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE ALCALDE MAYOR—ANTONIO PEREYRA LEAVES FOR COTO AND TURUCACA—VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO RESOLVES TO FOUND A CITY IN THE VALLEY OF THE GUARCO UNDER THE NAME OF CARTAGO—HIS VOYAGE TO NICARAGUA

1562-1568

ON the 30th of April, 1561, the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, having taken into consideration the fact that the *Licenciado* Cavallón, engaged as he was in the conquest of Costa Rica, was not in a position to give proper attention to the government of the province of Nicaragua, resolved to replace him in the office of *Alcalde mayor* by a gentleman resident in

the city of Santiago de Guatemala. This gentleman had been married in that city to Doña Isabel, daughter of Gaspar Arias Dávila, who had been one of the companions of Hernán Cortés in the conquest of Mexico and of Pedro de Alvarado in the conquest of Guatemala, and was a first cousin of Pedrarias. The name of the new *Alcalde mayor* of Nicaragua was Juan Vázquez de Coronado, a brother of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado who had been Governor of Nueva Galicia, in Mexico, and leader of the famous expedition that set out in quest of the chimerical Seven Cities of Cíbola which had been told of by Fray Marcos de Niza.¹

He was born in Salamanca in 1528.² His parents were Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado, *Alguacil mayor*³ of the Royal Chancellory of Granada, and Doña Catalina de Anaya, both of whom belonged to families of the high nobility. Another of his brothers, also named Juan, was one of the grooms⁴ in attendance upon Philip

¹ Possibly in the territory of Kansas—H. H. Bancroft's *History of Mexico*, Vol. II, p. 470.

² In May, 1563, Vázquez de Coronado declared himself to be forty years of age. León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VII, p. 16.

³ Equivalent to high sheriff in England. *Translator*.

⁴ In those times the personal domestic service of the Kings of Spain was composed of nobles. Thus, for example, on this voyage to England, the Marqués de Falces and the Conde de Gelves were among the men whose duty it was to serve at the table of the prince, Don Felipe.

II. and accompanied this prince on his first voyage to England on the occasion of his marriage to Queen Mary Tudor, in 1554. Later he served under Don Juan de Austria at the battle of Lepanto, in which he was in command of four galleys. At the age of seventeen, Juan Vázquez de Coronado had emigrated to Mexico, and, in 1550, had thence removed to Guatemala, provided with a royal order commending him to the favorable consideration of the President of the *Audiencia*. The President had appointed him *Alcalde mayor* of the Province of San Salvador. In the exercise of that office he had distinguished himself by suppressing the rebellion of a force of soldiers that had come up from Peru. He had also taken energetic measures in opposition to Hernando and Pedro de Contreras, sons of Rodrigo de Contreras and grandsons of Pedrarias, who had revolted in Nicaragua after vilely assassinating the Bishop, Fray Antonio de Valdivieso. He had also served as *Alcalde ordinario*, *Alcalde* of the Holy Brotherhood and *Procurador* of the city of Guatemala. In 1556, he had served as *Alcalde mayor* of Honduras, where he had labored industriously to put the affairs of that province in order and shown favor to the Indians. In 1559, he had taken part with many other gentlemen in the famous campaigns of Lancadón, Pochutla and Zuchiltepéquez,

under the command of the *Licenciado* Pedro Ramírez de Quiñones.

Vázquez de Coronado took possession of the *Alcaldía mayor* of Nicaragua in 1561, and, with the exceptional activity that distinguished him, had barely settled the noisy disputes that arose between the Bishop-elect, Don Lázaro Carrasco and the Archdeacon, Juan Alvarez, when he set forth from Granada in a barkentine to subjugate the Indians of the Solentiname Islands in the Lake of Nicaragua, who had been in revolt for more than fourteen years. In this he succeeded, by virtue of the tact and suavity that characterized him, and had the same success with the rebellious natives of Cotán and Bagaces.⁵ He then hastened to arm the whole province for the purpose of repelling the rebel Lope de Aguirre, who, according to advices Coronado had received, intended to pass down the San Juan River en route to Peru. During this activity he sent troops to Cavallón in Costa Rica and did all he could in his interest.

Believing that none better than Vázquez de Coronado could bring to a successful issue the interrupted work of conquest, the *Audiencia* also conferred upon him the *Alcaldía mayor* of

⁵The Bagaces Indians were of Mexican origin and peopled a territory which to-day belongs to Costa Rica in the province of Guanacaste, where the name is still perpetuated in the village of Bagaces.

Nuevo Cartago and Costa Rica, on the 2nd of April, 1562, with the same boundaries that marked the jurisdiction of his predecessor. The situation of the inhabitants of Garcimuñoz and of Los Reyes was most precarious, as much because of the great scarcity of provisions and clothes as because of the hostility of the Guetares *caciques*, so that the colony became speedily more and more depopulated, the soldiers returning, one after another, to Nicaragua, in spite of the endeavors and good will of the Padre Estrada Rávago. Vázquez de Coronado, in an effort to stay the desertion, sent out his lieutenant in the *Alcaldía mayor*, Juan de Ovalle, in a vessel with fifty men and supplies, and later sent after them another and larger ship, containing more provisions. The greater need remedied, he set about purchasing clothing and shoes, arms, saddles and other necessities for the cavalry. At the same time he occupied himself in recruiting his force, not a difficult enterprise for a captain so magnificent and liberal, for he kept an open house for all his people. It is not strange, therefore, that "many *Caballeros* of the nobility, who foregathered at the port of the Province of Nicaragua ready to join expeditions into various places,"* were seduced by his generosity, and resolved to accompany him to Costa

* Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 248.

Rica, with other principal residents of the province.

On the 18th of August, 1562, Juan Vázquez set forth from the city of León with eighty men and many horses and cattle. As a result of the heavy rains and the swollen rivers and marshes he had to pass, it was not until the 6th of September that he arrived at Nicoya. From this place he sent out a summons to the *caciques* of Bagaces, Cotán and Zapandí, whom he had left in peace on the occasion of his expedition to the islands of Solentiname. Having paid them many friendly attentions and recommended them to the favorable consideration of Juan Romo, *Corregidor* of Nicoya, he directed Fray Martín de Bonilla to be assiduous in their religious instruction. The *caciques* returned to their villages wholly satisfied.

From Nicoya he sent the cattle and horses to the town of Los Reyes in charge of men who were active and also good swimmers, while he, to avoid the rivers and the excessive rains, planned to follow by water in the small ship; but this vessel ran aground at the mouth of the Tempisque River, and it became necessary to await the arrival of the large ship, which had remained behind at Realejo. Before this, the vessel made a trip to Landecho to carry the merchandise bought in Nicaragua, and as later it made another with

a large cargo of maize, they were delayed in Nicoya until the 7th of November. The day following, the Captain took his departure and disembarked at Landecho. On the 10th he entered the town of Los Reyes, and found there but four soldiers, whose principal desire was to abandon the place. With gifts and promises he induced them to remain, and sent the ship on to Panama under the command of Juan de Zamora to procure necessities that could not be found in Nicaragua.

No sooner had the horses arrived than he set out on his expedition into the interior of the country, leaving at Los Reyes a garrison of ten men under the orders of a lieutenant; of these some were married. After a three days' trip he arrived at Garcimuñoz, where he was received with enthusiasm and much feasting. On the 20th, he took possession of his office of *Alcalde mayor* in the presence of the council, which delivered over to him, with customary solemnities, the royal standard.⁷ The unhappy inhabitants, naked and hungry, were succored with the utmost liberality by the captain. This done, he began at once the work of conquest.

The most pressing requisite for the pacification of the country appeared to be the punish-

⁷ This standard was of red and bore an image of the apostle St. James.

ment of the famous Garabito, who was still actively engaged in inciting rebellion. According to rumor, this crafty *cacique* had taken refuge in the country of his tributaries, the Votos. First, Vázquez de Coronado instituted proceedings against him for his many offenses, among which were the attack upon Cavallón during his return voyage to Nicaragua and the killing of a soldier who had been taken prisoner. Garabito was condemned to capital punishment and war was declared. The sentence handed down, a force of ninety men, under the command of Juan de Ovalle and Francisco de Marmolejo, took the field against the *cacique*. Marmolejo, with forty soldiers, arrived in the Votos country and was well received by the *cacica*, the chieftainess of that locality, who gave him supplies of maize, wild turkeys and wild hogs. At the end of a month he reached Garcimuñoz without having been able to encounter the rebel chief.

Juan de Ovalle, with the remaining fifty men, got as far as the provinces of Garabito and Coyoché and returned twenty days later with a principal chief called Taque,⁸ who tendered obedience in the name of Garabito and promised to send in a number of his people to render service in the town; but, as his offer was not fulfilled, Captain

⁸ In the language of Güetár, Taque or Taquetaque signifies son of a lord, or of a *cacique*; that is to say, noble.

Antonio Pereyra, with forty men, made an incursion into the Indian country and again Taque presented himself, pretending this time to be Garabito in person. Later another Indian chief came in, making the same assertion. These being well-known tactics of the subtle *cacique*, whose custom was to send in the most aged of his head men to see whether they would be killed, Pereyra took nothing for granted and brought them prisoners to Garcimuñoz, where he arrived on the 5th of January, 1563. Vázquez de Coronado, who was very kindly and conciliatory, expressed his satisfaction with the men, pardoned them and set them at liberty, whereupon thirty Indians came in to offer their services. Having news later that four of Garabito's leaders had taken refuge at the foot of a mountain, Juan Dávila set forth with guides in search of them and found them ensconced in two Indian huts, with twenty men, thirty women and some fifteen or more children. The Spanish leader asked them to take him to the place where their lord was in hiding. They replied that this was impossible, since Garabito, with but a handful of men, was continually on the march.

While these events were taking place, Vázquez de Coronado sent messengers to the eastern Gue-tare *caciques*, inviting them to pay him a visit. The first to present himself at Garcimuñoz was



A GUETAR CACIQUE.

Acerrí, who made his appearance on the 12th of December, 1562. The Captain entertained him with great cordiality, insisted upon his dining at his own table and gave him clothing, caps, shirts, scissors, needles and other articles to the value of about two hundred *pesos*. Accounts of this splendid reception being widely spread abroad among the Indians, the other chiefs lost no time in putting in an appearance in the town. On the 16th came Abaruca, *cacique* of Orosí; on the 1st of January, 1563, Coquiba of Pacaca, and, later, Yurucí of Cobux, Tuxustí of Ujarrací, Teviste from the Guarco valley, Atao of Corrosí, Biltalia of Turriarba, Corrirabá from the Abra, and Yurustí of Toyopán, Abite, Tuarco, Co and Oticara. All these received the same good treatment, and, in return for their friendly welcome, sent Indian servants into the city.

When Acerrí came in, he asked Vázquez de Coronado to aid him against the Indians of Quepo and Turucaca, who were constantly at war with him. The assistance was promised as to a subject of the King of Spain, but the Captain told Acerrí that before taking action, he wished to go into the Suerre country, and that, to facilitate his expedition, he wanted him to supply a force of Indian burden-bearers. When the chief asked how many he needed, Vázquez handed him four hundred grains of maize, which was the

method of counting among the Indians. Acerrí, greatly perturbed, assured the Captain that Garabito himself, with all his power, could not supply such a demand. The Captain replied that he would hear no further talk on the subject, and sent him back to his village to assemble the people.

The desire evinced by Vázquez de Coronado to penetrate into the Suerre country was based on the fame for riches that province had attained in Nicaragua during the times of Rodrigo de Contreras and Diego Gutiérrez, also on the exaggerated accounts the Indians themselves had given of them.

A few days later he sent word to the friendly *caciques* that he wished to visit them in their homes, and, indeed, went with a small force into the provinces of Abra⁹ and Toyapán. This was the first time Spaniards had come into the territory of the Indians with pacific intentions. Vázquez de Coronado was well received by them, therefore, and regaled with feasting and dancing, and, by presenting the wives and children of the *caciques* with gifts, did much to increase his popularity. He insisted, however, that the Guetares supply him with auxiliaries for his projected expedition into the Suerre country. On

⁹ Curridabat, near the city of San José, the capital of the republic.

their part, the *caciques* begged him to desist from this undertaking for the time being and help them instead to subdue their powerful enemies, the Indians of Quepo and Turucaca, who were continually waging war against them. So, to please his hosts, and as a gage of friendship, Vázquez de Coronado promised the aid they sought and returned at once to Garcimuñoz to make the necessary preparations. Leaving the city in the custody of Juan de Illanes de Castro and a small garrison, he resumed his march on the 27th of January, 1568, accompanied by Fray Martín de Bonilla, seventy Spanish soldiers and a few Indians. A three days' journey brought him to Acerrí,¹⁰ after having experienced many difficulties, occasioned principally by the horses that carried the impedimenta. On his arrival the *caciques* all joined in further festivities in his honor; war dances and feasts were given, and the Spanish soldiers were surprised to note that neither the women nor the children took flight at their approach, as was their custom.

The *cacique* Acerrí told Vázquez de Coronado that all was in readiness for the expedition and lodged him in his own house, and the *Alcalde mayor* embraced and thanked him for the excellent manner in which he had fulfilled his obliga-

¹⁰ A village in the province of San José which still preserves that name.

tion; but at the hour of departure, the number of Indian carriers mustered for the service was but eighty. He could provide no more, the *cacique* explained, though he protested that both his person and his subjects were at the disposal of the Captain for any service that might be required. At this, because he suspected Acerrí of trying to deceive him, Vázquez de Coronado betrayed great annoyance and at once ordered him seized and warned that unless he should supply the four hundred Indians demanded he would have him put to death. In this emergency, Acerrí besought his friends, the *caciques* of the Abra, to come to his relief. In response to his call, Yurustí, and Turrubará, a brother of Currirabá, came in with thirty more men. Convinced then that it was impossible to procure a larger number of carriers, Vázquez de Coronado relented, but told Acerrí that, since he did not have them himself, he must lead him to where more might be found, whereupon, as was most natural, the *cacique* suggested Quepo,¹¹ the country of the enemy.

The expedition, comprising sixty Spaniards, the three *caciques* mentioned and one hundred and ten other Indians, set out on the 5th of February. The Captain had insisted on taking along

¹¹ The plains of Pirris as far as the river of that name. B. A. Thiel—*ibid.*

the horses also, in order that the soldiers should be compelled to open a road to Quepo, though it had been the opinion throughout the camp that they ought to be left behind because of the great labors they had undergone during the recent journey. Acerrí traveled under guard, lest he should escape and take with him the burden-bearers. After a day's travel the company arrived in the valley of the Candelaria. Here Acerrí asked Vázquez de Coronado to capture Tuarco, one of his chiefs then in rebellion against him, who was at large in the neighborhood. Nine men with guides were sent out in search of the rebel and came upon him in a mountain fastness in the midst of a drunken debauch. Tuarco submitted, but it was discovered that the captive had just sacrificed four young boys to the spirit of a departed brother. The corpses were found spitted for a barbecue, enveloped in cotton blankets and adorned with golden jewelry and other articles. The captive promised, however, never to return to such barbarous practices.

In reaching Quepo from the valley of the Candelaria, Vázquez de Coronado was delayed ten days. The distance was only twenty leagues but the difficulties in his path were enormous; he had to make his way continually through the densest of forests, and over high and rugged mountains, and was repeatedly forced to cast

away enormous stones from his path, to permit the passage of the forty horses. Of these, but twenty reached Quepo. Hunger and thirst too caused great suffering. As on their return trip they found a much better road, the Spaniards afterwards believed that the Indians had deliberately led them over the more difficult route in the hope that they all might perish. But, having arrived within six leagues of Quepo, in the course of this outward journey, Vázquez de Coronado ordered Ignacio Cota, the ensign, to advance with forty men and demand of the natives that they give ear to the Holy Evangelists and declare their obedience to the King. At a river near the village the ensign's party captured some native boys, whom he sent to the *caciques* with instructions to repeat the demands dictated by his superior. The next morning a head man among the natives presented himself at the camp, followed by several Indians carrying provisions. When Cota warned him of the approach of the Captain, the messenger replied that, should he come, his demands would be complied with.

On the arrival of Juan Vázquez himself, eight of the leading Indians came out to welcome him on behalf of the *cacique*, bringing presents of wild hogs, maize, fruits and *pinole*.¹² The day

¹² A native drink, made of parched corn ground and mixed with cocoa. *Translator.*

after, Corrohoire, the lord of Quepo, presented himself in person. He was "the handsomest Indian I have ever seen in the Indies," the *Conquistador* says of this chief in a letter to Philip II.¹³ The first time, he was accompanied by sixty men, laden with food, and acknowledged his vassalage, as had been required of him. Later he returned with more of his people and a larger quantity of provisions and presented the captain with ten pieces of carved gold. Vázquez distributed the gold among the soldiers, for they had become impatient to sack the rich village, which they were aware contained cotton, maize, beans, *ayotes*, *yucas*, plantains, *zapotes* and many other fruits in abundance.

To drunkenness the Quepos were not accustomed. They possessed much gold that had been acquired from the tribes situated on the slopes of the Atlantic and a great quantity of cotton clothing. They were "a people with good features, warlike and graceful in manner, and loved the truth—a trait little met with among the natives."¹⁴ In the village the Spaniards discovered a tree of a species the Indians call *chirob*, resembling both the pepper and clove. According to Vázquez de Coronado, it was most efficacious in cases of headache.

¹³ Peralta—*Ibid.*, p. 771.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

From Quepo, Bartolomé Alvarez de Coy went out in search of a port and found one only four leagues away. After peace was established between the Quepos and the Guetares accompanying the expedition, Corrohore asked the Captain to aid him against the Indians of Coto, who had made war on him and carried off his sister, Dulcehe by name, and some of his subjects, offering in return for such assistance to contribute to the expedition a hundred men. The *Alcalde mayor* acceded to the *cacique's* wishes, and, having dismissed Acerri, who returned with his people to his village, set out from Quepo on the 27th of February. After a journey of a day and a half, he reached the Pacific Ocean, and traveled along the coast for two days in the direction of the Gulf of Osa.¹⁵ Then, having plunged again into the interior, he continued his march for two days, first along the banks of a river and then over the mountains, until he came to a broad stretch of plains.¹⁶ Over these he traveled for three days and finally came to Coto. Before entering the village, Francisco de Marmolejo advanced towards a fort occupied by these Indians, with the intention of taking it by surprise and capturing the *caciques*. He attacked the place at dawn but with over-confidence and no precaution, with

¹⁵ Gulf of Dulce.

¹⁶ The *llanuras* (flat, level plains) of Boruca and Térraba.

soldiers too who were almost entirely without arms or bucklers, for these had been left with the Indian burden-bearers in the rear.

The first twenty-five men had not penetrated ten paces within the fort when the Cotos threw themselves upon them so fiercely and impetuously that they were driven back pell-mell and forced to scramble over the palisades, the entrance being too narrow to crowd through. Twenty-two of the Spaniards were wounded, among them the leader, "with the bravest wounds ever received in the Indies."¹⁷ Marmolejo retired a short distance from the fort; the Indians pursued, armed with lances, javelins and bucklers made of the hide of the tapir, and, valorously attacking in their turn, forced the invaders to retreat to a distance equal to a shot from an arquebus. Here the Indians attempted to burn the Spaniards by setting fire to the dry grass of the *sabana*; by starting a counter fire, however, the latter succeeded in saving themselves.

The combat continued with great fury for two hours, throughout which the Cotos displayed astonishing boldness. With the few arquebuses they had, the Spanish succeeded in killing twenty-seven men and five women who had mounted to the house tops to encourage their

¹⁷ Ricardo Fernández Guardia—*Cartas de Juan Vázquez de Coronado*, p. 33.

warriors with cries. Of the seven *caciques* who had occupied the fort they killed two; but Marmolejo was at last forced to abandon the field and sent two soldiers, who were good runners, back to Vázquez de Coronado to ask for help. The latter was found two leagues in the rear. When he learned of the defeat of his vanguard, he advanced with twenty men by forced marches until he came up with Marmolejo, and then, having hurriedly cared for the wounded, nearly all of whom had been pierced through the shoulders, thighs and arms, he attacked the fort with the soldiers he had brought with him and the few who had come out of the battle unscathed.

In a description of the fortress that Vázquez de Coronado has left to us, he says: ¹⁸

“The village of Coctu lies on a spur of the sierra and has the shape of an egg, narrow at first and somewhat broader in the middle. It possesses eighty-four houses, arranged in good order. At each extremity stands a house, a little farther on two more, forming a triangle, and then follow three, and finally four, grouped in a square. Each house is located at a distance of four feet more or less from its neighbor and the result is most orderly in appearance. In the midst of

¹⁸ Ricardo Fernández Guardia—*Cartas de Juan Vázquez de Coronado*, pp. 33 and 48.

each group of four houses there is a small plaza, approached through narrow, artificial lanes, for the houses are raised to a height of half a yard above the ground. With the enemy gathered in the plaza, which is quite small, the Coctus, therefore, can assail them from every one of the four houses, through portholes and windows constructed for the purpose, and so that, since it is impossible for the assailants to be seen, those who enter the square will be wounded before they can determine whence the missiles come.

"In each of the houses live twenty-five Indians, with their wives and children. In some there are more or less, according to the numbers in the families, but in every house there is room for four hundred persons. After the first was taken, it was necessary to take the second, then the third and finally the fourth, for all were round in shape, with beams two fathoms in circumference, and are thatched with straw, cleverly arranged. The cusp (apex) takes the form of a spire. This stronghold has two gateways, one to the east and the other to the west. To the north and south lie deep and rugged ravines wherein the Indians cultivate gardens of most beautiful aspect. The fort is surrounded by two palisades with a ditch between.¹⁹ The gate-

¹⁹In another description of this fort, Vázquez de Coronado, says that the entrances are defended by three palisades and two lines of ditches.

ways are very small and made in the form of drawbridges. In all these lands there has not been seen anything as strong or well devised."

Near this fort the Cotos had built another and smaller one, containing twelve houses and constructed after the same plans.

When Vázquez de Coronado approached, he called upon its defenders, through the medium of a scrivener and an Indian interpreter known as Cristóbal, to render obedience to the King of Spain, to give ear to the preaching of the Holy Evangelists, and to restore the sister of the *cacique* Corroho. The Indians only turned out of doors two wild hogs and bade the Spaniards to go back whence they came. Summoned a second time, they replied evasively, sending their women, children and effects meanwhile to a place of safety through a passageway opposite the one at which the Spaniards were stationed. In the midst of his interpreting, Cristóbal was suddenly heard to cry out: "Señor, look! They are shooting at me!" At that instant a soldier by the name of Pedro Alonso Cano dashed in, intrepidly leading the attack, and, behind him, the others threw themselves into the fort. The Indians soon abandoned the place, having first set it on fire.

The victory thus gained, the Spaniards set

about caring for their wounds, which were many and serious. The following day some soldiers surprised two Indian chiefs hidden in a field of maize, doubtless to spy upon the Spaniards. Vázquez de Coronado received them kindly, however, and, restoring one of them to liberty, sent him out to call back the Indians who had retreated to the mountains. This messenger returned bringing in two Indians who came to treat for peace. Vázquez having succeeded in gaining their confidence, at the end of three days the Cotos with their *caciques* presented themselves and yielded their allegiance, whereupon the peace pact was sealed with an exchange of gifts. The *caciques* presented the Captain with many objects of gold, and received in exchange scissors, combs, axes and other articles.

The Cotos were "a people of great cleanliness," frank and loyal. They inhabited the northern borders of the Gulf of Dulce and were very rich, possessing so much gold that they could afford to be most lavish in their gifts of the precious metal—also cotton clothing of fine texture, and great plantations of maize, beans and all kinds of fruit trees. The tapir, deer and wild hog abounded in their country, and in their rivers were many fish, particularly trout and shad. They slept in hammocks, and used rustic seats and finely-wrought earthenware. Being ex-

tremely warlike, their bodies were covered with scars—relics of the continual hostilities waged against their neighbors in the effort to despoil them of their treasure. It was their custom to kill their male prisoners and keep their heads for trophies. Women and children were reduced to slavery, and were invariably sacrificed at the death of their masters. To the old men and the women was assigned the work of tilling the soil. The women also accompanied their husbands to the wars, handed them their war clubs and lances during the combats, and threw rocks at the enemy. For this reason the Guetares dubbed them *Biritecas*, or Amazons. Near the hammocks were the racks for lances, clubs and other arms. Here too were hung their astonishingly tough bucklers, which were made of tapir hide. They did not eat human flesh, but, among themselves, there was much strife and great slaughter; indeed, immediately a war-cry pierced the air, a flock of buzzards would gather large enough to obscure the sun.

When their peace had been made with Vázquez de Coronado, the *caciques* of Coto restored the sister of Corrohore and the other slaves captured from his people, and Corrohore returned with them to his own country wholly satisfied. Before his departure, the captain told him to summon his friend, Xiriara, *cacique* of Durucaca

and Borucaca, who came in soon afterwards with two of his leading men and declared allegiance.

In reply to questions respecting the localities from which they obtained their gold, the Cotos said that they gathered grains of considerable size by scooping them up from the rivers with cups, and that each village had its own river. Of these villages they were only willing, however, to indicate one that belonged to Ucacara, which was at a distance of four days' journey, and had been destroyed in the war. For want of interpreters, an expedition made up of fifteen men that set out at once in search of the river, returned without having found it. In Coto, as had been the case in Quepo, the soldiers demanded that their chief show himself more energetic in the matter of producing gold and that he give them a free hand in taking it away from the Indians.²⁰ As this would have involved depredations that the always honorable and humane Vázquez de Coronado refused to countenance, at that time was born the discontent which afterwards resulted in the consequences about to be related.

There at Coto the Captain had been informed

²⁰ "Some of the soldiers had the impudence to say that he did not make war as they would have him—with fire and sword." Juan Dávila's relation to Philip II. León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. III, p. 33; Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 395; *Colección de Documentos inéditos del Archivo de Indias*, Vol. XVI, p. 323.

of the existence of many rich villages situated some on the Atlantic and some on the Pacific slope, but, since it was impossible at the time, because of the condition of his many wounded men, to say nothing of the lack of munitions of war and the approach of the rainy season, to pursue the conquest as he wished, he determined to return to Garcimuñoz to recuperate. On the 20th of March, therefore, he began the journey back, accompanied by the Coto and Turucaca Indians, carrying the wounded in hammocks. Among the wounded was one of the Barahonas, brother-in-law of Cavallón. But before any great progress had been made, the Cotos deserted, and, as the wounded then had to be transported on the men's shoulders at a cost of much hardship and suffering, the expedition repaired to Quepo on the way. The *cacique* came out to receive them, with his people, bearing provisions. When Vázquez de Coronado left, it was with one hundred men loaned him by Corrohore to carry the wounded. He then set out for the village of Pacaca, which had risen in revolt. Learning there that the *cacique* was holding as slaves to be used for sacrifice twenty-two Indians of the Mangue tribe, the Spanish leader caused them to be brought before him and gave them their liberty, after which he ordered them to return to their own country of Chorotega²¹ and

²¹ The Chorotega of Costa Rica, situated on the eastern

take up their residence near the port of Landecho. These unhappy Indians were all that remained of six or seven thousand Chorotegas who had inhabited the eastern coast of the Gulf of Nicoya and been exterminated by the Guetares. Employing the customary diplomacy of the Guetares, Coquiba declined to present himself in person, but his messengers brought to Vázquez de Coronado a golden disk, with excuses that were many and most adroit.

On the 18th of April Vázquez made his entry into Garcimuñoz. There he found the famous Franciscan Friar, Pedro de Betanzos, who had come from Guatemala to aid him in his work. With much satisfaction, also, he learned that the ship he had sent to Panama had returned laden with powder, lead, clothing and other requisites, and that the *Alcalde ordinario* Francisco Gallegos de Villavicencio, had despatched the vessel again to Nicoya to secure provisions, sending along, in obedience to instructions, the Captain's silverware in payment therefor. With these new auxiliaries, he was now able to give thought to the continuation of the conquest and determined to establish a colony in Turucaca. While the necessary preparations were being made, he sent the sergeant-major, Juan de Illanes, at the

border of the Gulf of Nicoya, between the port of Herradura and the Abangares River.

head of sixty men, into the valley of the Guarco to suppress an uprising. Quitao, one of the principal *caciques*,²² came out to meet the force, accompanied by twelve of his people, and indicated that he desired to confer with Vázquez de Coronado with a view to the establishment of peace, offering to bring over with him the *caciques* of Atirro and Turriarva. Twenty days after his departure, Illanes de Castro returned to Garcimuñoz, bringing with him these Indian chiefs. They were well treated by the *Alcalde mayor* but informed, in accordance with his custom, that they must declare allegiance to the King of Spain and become converted to the Catholic faith.

At this Quitao addressed himself to the other *caciques* in these words: "Ye have heard what this captain has said to us in the name of his King and master and how he demands of us obedience to a new law and a new master. Answer him, all of you, since ye are all at liberty to speak."²³ The Indians replied with one voice, telling him to act as seemed best and that whatever he might do would be agreeable to them. Quitao then acknowledged that he was tired of wandering about the forests as a refugee and professed that he wished to submit, but

²² This *cacique* was an envoy of Correque, prince of the Güetares of the east, who lived in the valley of Ujarraz.

²³ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 778.

cautioned them that by such action they would become obligated to serve the King and the *Alcalde mayor* and that he who should fail in this service would be punished with great severity. Among the Spaniards, needless to say, the prudence and common sense displayed by this Indian evoked much admiration. The *caciques* who accompanied Quitao were Don Juanillo and those from Atirro, Turriarva, Orosí, Puririsí, Quircó, Abux and Guarco. In all they sent in one hundred and fifty of their subjects for service. Garabito, and Quizarco, the brother of Coquiba, who had been punished by Cavallón, continued in rebellion. The former, however, always had a representative in the Spanish retinue.

It has already been stated that some of the soldiers were very much dissatisfied with Vázquez de Coronado because that leader would not permit them to rob the Indians as they pleased. So great was the disgust of the ensign-major, Ignacio Cota, that he left for Guatemala after having tried to excite the soldiers against their chief. Another set in circulation an infamous libel against the *Alcalde mayor* in Garcimuñoz. These were the beginnings of a conspiracy hatched by a man named Fajardo, the author of the libel, who proposed to various of his companions to go over to Alonso

Vázquez, Governor of Veragua, but, although Francisco de Marmolejo and Juan Dávila took part in the movement, when it was discovered by Fray Pedro de Betanzos, Vázquez de Coronado contented himself with arresting Fajardo, and shut his eyes to the guilt of the others because of the existing need of men.

On the 12th of June, 1563, Captain Antonio Pereyra set out for Coto and Turucaca with sixty well equipped men, including forty arquebusiers, and took with him besides 280 horses. Immediately afterwards Vázquez de Coronado resolved to reconnoiter the valley of the Guarco, which for its beauty and fine climate Juan Illanes de Castro had praised highly as "the best place in the Indies wherein to locate a city,"²⁴ and, having sent on a soldier in advance to notify the *caciques* of his coming, set out with sixty men and the Padres Martín de Bonilla and Pedro de Betanzos. For six days the *Alcalde mayor* remained in the valley, which he found indeed most desirable because of the freshness of a climate like that of Valladolid and the great fertility of its soil, and selected a site for the establishment of a town near the confluence of the Purires and Taras rivers, about three hundred yards from the first named and two hundred from the other.²⁵ He gave to the future city the

²⁴ Peralta—*Ibid.*

²⁵ Cleto González Víquez—*Apuntes sobre Geografía Antigua de Costa Rica*, II, Ciudad del Lodo.



WAR MACE HEAD.
National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo. Gómez.)

name of Cartago, the name that had already been given to the province.

From the Guarco he sent for Sabaca, the *cacique* of Tayutic, for the purpose of questioning him in regard to the death of Diego Gutiérrez, in order that he might send a report to the King respecting a disaster so important. The *cacique* excused himself for the moment, offering to go and see him at Garcimuñoz. On his return to that city, the inhabitants pressed Vázquez de Coronado with great insistence to permit them to remove to the Guarco valley, concerning the attractions of which so much had been said. Furthermore, residence in Garcimuñoz involved serious inconveniences; it was far from the localities inhabited by the Indians, the neighboring lands were very sterile and during six months of the year the city was lashed by the east winds. Moved by these reasons, the *Alcalde mayor* consented to the migration, requiring only that the inhabitants should plant fields of maize to provide for their sustenance.

In the month of July, Vázquez de Coronado repaired to Nicaragua to attend to the affairs of that province and make the necessary preparations to continue his enterprise in Costa Rica, leaving behind, as his lieutenant, the sergeant-major, Juan de Illanes de Castro.

CHAPTER XIII

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF THE CONQUEST—SICKNESS OF VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO—HIS RETURN TO COSTA RICA—HE DISEMBARKS AT THE PORT OF CORONADO—HE JOINS DIEGO CARO DE MESA AND ANTONIO PEREYRA—DOWNFALL OF PEREYRA—VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO CROSSES THE GREAT CORDILLERA AND REACHES THE PROVINCE OF ARA, OR TALAMANCA—THE DISCOVERY OF THE GOLD WASHINGS IN THE ESTRELLA OR CHANGUINOLA RIVER—SUBMISSION OF THE TRIBES ABOUT ALMIRANTE BAY AND OF ALL THOSE IN TALAMANCA, TARIACA AND OTHERS ALONG THE ATLANTIC COAST—UPRISING OF ATIBEO, TURRIALBA AND UJARRAZ—VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO ARRIVES AT THE NEW CITY OF CARTAGO—FRAY LORENZO DE BIENVENIDA—HUMANE CONDUCT OF VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO—HIS VOYAGE TO SPAIN AND TRAGIC DEATH AT SEA

1563-1565

FROM Nicaragua Vázquez de Coronado sent cattle and horses to Costa Rica, with a force of thirty soldiers, fifteen of whom were destined for Antonio Pereyra. With feverish activity he assembled men, provisions, arms, munitions of war, clothing and other necessities for the new expedition he was projecting and caused a vessel to be fitted out in the Realejo, until at last his powers failed him and

he succumbed to illness from fatigue. The physicians and his friends advised him to place the enterprise in the hands of some reliable officer while his health was being restored; but the doughty leader insisted on setting out, and proceeded to Nicoya with sixty soldiers. At that place he concluded the provisioning of his force, laying in a specially good supply of maize and the hemp slippers made in that place. Thirty men he sent to Garcimuñoz and with as many more set sail on the 3rd of December, 1568, his object being to rejoin Pereyra and Diego Caro de Mesa, *Alguacil mayor* of the province, to whom he had sent written instructions to repair to the port of Coronado¹ with men and horses and there await his coming. In order that he might explore the coast, he laid his course close to land and reconnoitered thoroughly, frequently approaching very near in a small boat at serious personal risk. On the way he put in at the port of Landecho to give succor in passing to the few remaining inhabitants, whom he found in nakedness and great wretchedness. He finally disembarked at the river and port of Coronado.

As Diego Caro de Mesa had not yet put in an appearance, and fearing that some misfortune had overtaken him, Vázquez de Coronado

¹ One of the mouths of the Río Grande de Térraba, or Diquís, called Boca Mala (Bad Mouth).

with part of his force set out in search of him, at the same time despatching two soldiers to Pereyra to notify him of his arrival, after which he went as far as Quepo, where he found Caro de Mesa on the Mangues River. Here he was cordially received by the friendly *caciques* and accepted from them the customary gifts. Meanwhile the messengers who had gone in search of Pereyra came upon that leader at the camp of La Cruz,² two days' journey from the port of Coronado. That leader was on the march towards Garcimuñoz, for it had become impossible to sustain himself any longer in that locality. His outgoing trail had led him through terrible hardships occasioned by the torrential rains and swollen rivers; all his baggage and horses had been lost. On his arrival at Coto, he was deserted by the guides he had brought from Quepo but at last he succeeded in making his way into the Province of Cía,³ and from there Diego de Trexo had made his way to Yabo and Xarixaba, hamlets situated from thirty to forty leagues from the city of Natá. The Indians in these regions yielded their allegiance. In the Cía country Pereyra founded a city to which he gave the name of Nueva Cartago. At the end of a

²This camp of La Cruz must not be confounded with the other of the same name established by Cavallón.

³The *llanuras* (plains) of Buenos Aires, B. A. Thiel, *ibid.*

month, because of the failure of his provisions, he returned to Coto; as this country was then in a state of rebellion, however, he continued until he arrived at Boruca. Here also he was unable to sustain himself because of the scant food supply and he then resolved to return to Garcimuñoz. While Pereyra was at Nueva Cartago, there had arrived at Yabo and Xarixaba one of the captains of Alonso Vázquez, Governor of Veragua, but, as the Indians showed him the evidence of previous possession left by Diego de Trexo, the new arrival took his departure.

The soldiers of Pereyra were in a most lamentable state. They had suffered much from nakedness and hunger, for, as has been said, all their clothes and provisions had been lost in the passage of the rivers, and great discontent reigned among them. Though Vázquez de Coronado supplied them with what they needed, it was only by means of prayers and promises that he induced them to remain with him; they were strongly inclined to resume their march. The return of the *Alcalde mayor* brought much satisfaction to the Indians. Many who had been in hiding came in to pay him a visit and to lay before him complaints of ill treatment at the hands of Pereyra and his command.

The ship discharged of its cargo, Vázquez de Coronado arranged to have it set out at once to

bring in new supplies for the enterprise. As luck would have it, however, on leaving port, through carelessness of the pilot, she ran aground on the bar. This proved a serious misfortune, for there was no means of replacing the vessel.

The *Alcalde mayor's* chief desire was to proceed into the Province of Ara⁴ and other provinces situated on the slopes of the northern ocean, "in which endeavor many captains and men had been lost"⁵ and their secrets and "enchantment" still remained unknown; so he took up his march toward the Atlantic, and, overcoming unheard-of difficulties, made his way over the Great Cordillera. All the horses were left by the way, with the greater part of the impedimenta, and so lofty and rugged were the mountains, that the day came in which it was impossible to find water, but on the summit of the Cordillera the *conquistadores* came upon a magnificent and unique spectacle—the two oceans. Rough as were these men, they were enthralled "by the consciousness of their nearness to heaven."⁶

After a six days' journey, the expedition reached the Province of Ara, the *caciques* of which, having already learned of the Captain's

⁴Talamanca.

⁵León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. IV, p. 358.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 387.

goodness through the *caciques* of Quepo and Coto, received him most cordially and bestowed upon him an abundant supply of provisions, together with many golden objects skillfully worked. In return he gave them agricultural implements, caps, shirts and gewgaws. On the 24th of January, 1564, he took possession of the hamlet of Ara⁷ and received the allegiance of the *caciques* Yaranaba, Duyba and Duy.

Having selected the hamlet of Ara as a base of operations and resting place, Vázquez de Coronado sent Diego Caro de Mesa with twenty-five men to Terbi, where he discovered the famous Estrella River,⁸ whence sprang the legend of those times concerning another Eldorado.

The *caciques* Cabeaza, Zurinza and Meza, whose territories were embraced within the Province of Ara, hastened to declare their allegiance and offer their services to the camp. The *Alcalde mayor* received them with his accustomed cordiality, and this time with even better reason, for he had received advices that Alonso Vázquez was approaching on a tour of conquest from the direction of Veragua and leaving great havoc and destruction in his wake. The *Alcalde mayor* caused his surgeon to treat the injuries

⁷ The name of Ara is still preserved in one of the affluents of the river Tarire, in Talamanca—the river Ararí. This river is also known by the name of Larí.

⁸ The Changuinola and Tilorio River.

of the *cacique* Yaranaba, who had come in with serious wounds in the head and thighs, and another chief named Iztolín was also cured of a wound in his hands. Both recovered rapidly, to the amazement of the natives, who thereupon came in great numbers to be treated for their infirmities. In this way the art of Hippocrates became a powerful auxiliary of the conqueror. With the convalescence of the sick and the return of Caro de Mesa giving glowing accounts of the auriferous river discovered by him, the camp was removed towards the middle of February to the Cutcurú River, in the valley of the Duy,⁹ and possession was taken of the hamlet of that name on the 17th. All the neighboring *caciques*, among them Quaquinque and Zorobarú,¹⁰ came in and submitted, and, with good will, offered their services. They brought with them gifts of gold, for which were returned articles of Castilian workmanship, the Spaniard being careful always not to betray the greed for this metal which had brought destruction to so many Spanish captains in those lands. Vázquez de Coronado had the rivers and ravines of Duy carefully searched by his negro slaves, who took from some of them some excellent specimens of gold. A particularly rich find was made in the river

⁹Between the Sixaola and Changuinola rivers.

¹⁰Zorobaró was the name originally borne by Almirante Bay.

discovered by Caro de Mesa and called by him the Río de la Estrella, because at its mouth he saw reflected a star of great brilliance.¹¹ In March the gold washings of this river were parceled out among the *conquistadores*. The best, extending over a distance of a quarter of a league, was reserved for the King; nor were the interests of Don Juan Martínez de Landecho, President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, forgotten, or those of the Padre Estrada Rávago, which was most just.¹²

From Cutcurú the expedition passed on to Quequexque and Taranca, places situated on Almirante Bay, and possession was taken of Ceverín. From Quequexque Bartolomé Alvarez with a small force proceeded down the Estrella River for a distance of six or seven leagues, looking for the sea. He was, however, brought to a halt by the marshes at Cojerín, or Cojerán, a league from the coast. On his return Vázquez de Coronado raised camp and set out for the Tarire River.¹³ In the Coaza valley, which the natives called the valley of the Cicuas, or Valley of the Foreigners,¹⁴ for here resided a colony of

¹¹ The planet Venus.

¹² For the details of this partition, see León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. IV, p. 324.

¹³ Called to-day Sixaola in its lower course.

¹⁴ In the Bribri language *Stigua* means stranger. Dr. Wm. M. Gabb—*Tribus y Lenguas Indígenas de Costa Rica*; León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. III, p. 427.

Mexican Chichimecas that had mixed with other tribes,¹⁵ he came upon the village of Quepza, where at first the Indians sought by every means in their power to conceal themselves, but in the end they were brought into the open and declared their allegiance. It was then discovered that the *cacique* was that same Iztolín whose wound had been healed by the surgeon at Ara. Vázquez de Coronado, who was familiar with Nahuatl, exhorted him in his own language to become converted to the Catholic religion. He then proceeded to Ciruro, on the bank of the river Flazquita, which was also found to be auriferous. On the 28th of March he arrived at Tariaca,¹⁶ which yielded allegiance as did all the neighboring villages situated on the hills of Corotapa. Here it was that, in 1540, had stood the fortress of Marbella, constructed by Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz. From Tariaca he passed on to the Province of Pococí,¹⁷ arriving on the 3rd of April at the village of Querria, where vassalage was promised by Yabicara, *cacique* of that place, Maruz of Auyaque and Bijcara, Cocosí of Zequepa, and various others. Later, he pro-

¹⁵ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. IV, p. 498. These Mexicans were discovered by Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz in 1540.

¹⁶ The coast from Port Limón as far as Hold Harbor.

¹⁷ The coast from Portete, as far as the mouth of the Matina.

ceeded to Buca, a village in the same Province of Pococí, situated on the Matina River, and took possession on the 9th of April. Diriacá and Cuxurit submitted, as did Diruamo, *cacique* of Parragua.¹⁸ A leading chief named Biarquirá declared allegiance in the name of Birior, *cacique* of the village of Xuana, who had his seat of government in the lower waters of the Matina. Cabeara and Coragua, *caciques* of Babagua, Puca of Chirripó and several others also came in.

Later, pursuing his march, Vázquez de Coronado arrived on the 20th of April at Tayutic, afterwards called Teotique. The *cacique* Sabaca probably told him that he had gone to see him at Garcimuñoz but that he had arrived on the day following the Captain's departure for Nicaragua, and might have repeated to him what he had already told to Juan de Illanes de Castro: that the *cacique* of Suerre still preserved the spoils of the expedition of Diego Gutiérrez, who was killed nearly twenty-three years before in that country. Sabaca renewed the allegiance given at Garcimuñoz.

From Tayutic the expedition continued its march as far as the village of Atirro, which Vázquez de Coronado, having left the place in

¹⁸ On the *llanos* (rolling plains) of Siquirres. B. A. Thiel—Ibid.

peace when he went to Nicaragua, was disappointed to find in full rebellion. Turrialba and Ujarraz were also up in arms. At Corrosí, a place situated near the present village of Tucurrique, he came upon the mutilated corpses of two Spaniards who had gone out in search of maize, as he afterwards learned, for the new city of Cartago, which had been settled in the absence of Vázquez de Coronado. He also found pottery strewn along the road.

The Indians fell upon the rear guard, but Vázquez de Coronado, who had gone forward, returned with great celerity and vigorously repulsed the attack. In a difficult pass at the entrance of the Guarco valley,¹⁹ he discovered a dangerous ambushade. The *Alcalde mayor*, however, protecting his flanks with the arquebusiers, made it possible for his force to pass through, the Indians not daring to attack; they contented themselves with hurling war cries at them from the crest of a neighboring hill. Nevertheless, in spite of this small success, dismay spread through the ranks. The soldiers reasoned from the fact that the Indians had dared to kill the two Spaniards, that the city had already been destroyed, and that there remained for them no secure refuge from their terrible hardships.

In order to restore their drooping spirits, the

¹⁹ Ujarraz valley.



SPANISH STIRRUP OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

Worn by the *Conquistadores* in Costa Rica in the 16th century. In National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

leader called them together and said to them: "Ye are Spaniards, sons of noble fathers, and must show your courage in this emergency. Be not dismayed, for it is characteristic of the Spanish nation to perform deeds that exceed the highest standards of greatness." He added that, as their leader, he must be first in all risks and losses, and told them to choose men among themselves, and he would give them sufficient power to proceed to Nicaragua and Guatemala and sell, not only his personal property and estate and the jewels and finery of his wife, but also, if it should become necessary, to pledge his sons; and he further assured them that he had no doubt that the President of the *Audiencia* and the authorities of Nicaragua, who, up to that time, had been unwilling to supply them with any necessities, would also give them assistance when they knew the desperate condition in which they were placed. Reheartened by such manly and generous words, the soldiers swore to follow their chief to the end and not desert their flag.

In the month of May, the expedition reached Cartago, to the great surprise of the inhabitants, who had given Vázquez de Coronado up for dead; indeed they had supposed that this was the cause of the Indian uprising. It appeared that following his instructions, Juan de Illanes de Castro had caused the inhabitants of Garci-

muñoz to remove to the Guarco valley and that there the city of Cartago had been laid out and built in the space of three months by the *Alcalde ordinario*, Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa, with the aid of the Indians of the valley. The migration had taken place in the month of March, 1564.²⁰ But the life of the newly born town had been far from tranquil during the absence of the *Alcalde mayor*. One after another the Indian tribes had risen in revolt; those from Co had fortified themselves on the heights of the volcano ²¹ and Captain Fajardo had gone out with twenty men to give them battle. He conquered them, although with great difficulty, for the ascent of the mountain was exceedingly arduous. Pedro Alonso Cano had forced an entry into Currirabá; Augustín de Hinojosa had entered Ujarracé, Orosí and Corrosí; but, as the rebels had strengthened their forces on the right bank of the Reventazón, it had been necessary to construct a network of *bejucos* (rattan reeds) in order to cross the river and put them to rout. Captain Fajardo afterwards had suppressed, with severe punishment, a rebellion in Pacaca.

These uprisings by the Indians resulted from

²⁰ Cleto González Víquez—*Apuntes*. The first *cabildo* or municipal council of Cartago was composed of Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa, Pedro Alonso Cano, Diego Caro de Mesa, Miguel de Góngora, Luis de Parada, Bartolomé Álvarez de Coy and Jerónimo de Barros.

²¹ The volcano of Co, called to-day the volcano of Irasé.

their being continually despoiled of their maize to provision the city. The crops for the past few years had been very poor and the food supply had become more and more scarce throughout the country; so that the poor Indians had had a hard struggle to keep life in their bodies, and it had been the same with the Spaniards, with the difference, however, that the former were defending the legitimate fruits of their labor. This last rebellion had been by far the most serious. On one occasion the Orosí Indians killed eight Spaniards who had attempted to steal their maize, and the horses brought along to carry the grain were also destroyed. Two expeditions had been at once sent out against the Indians by different routes, one under the command of Illanes de Castro and the other under Pedro Alonso Cano. They were on the march all night in order to surprise the village at dawn, but on their arrival they found that the Indians had already retired to the forests—and nothing was found but the corpses of some Spaniards, from which the hands and feet had been hacked off. Later, Anguciana de Gamboa had been placed in command of a punitive expedition, which, as he himself assures us,²² was completely successful. Nevertheless, it is certain that hostilities had continued up to the time of the arrival of the

²² Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 380.

Alcalde mayor and that the situation of the inhabitants of Cartago had become so critical at that time that they were planning to abandon the city.

Vázquez de Coronado found that the *caciques* Aserri, Currirabá, Yurustí, Quircó and Puririsí had been arrested, but as the investigation instituted by him resulted in establishing their innocence, he set them at liberty, only recommending that they send in some of their people for service in the town. This done, he ordered Anguciana de Gamboa, with fifty men, to set out again and bring about the submission of the rebels, and himself with a cavalry detachment proceeded as far as the lower end of the Guarco²³ to summon the Indians to obedience. The rebellious band, however, refused to come in, instead hurling shouts of defiance from the heights surrounding the valley. But one Indian was caught by Anguciana and the prisoner was killed by his orders. Afterwards, it appears, one or two others were quartered by command of Vázquez de Coronado.²⁴

If this is true, it is Vázquez de Coronado's sole act of cruelty in Costa Rica, for it must be said

²³ The Ujarras valley.

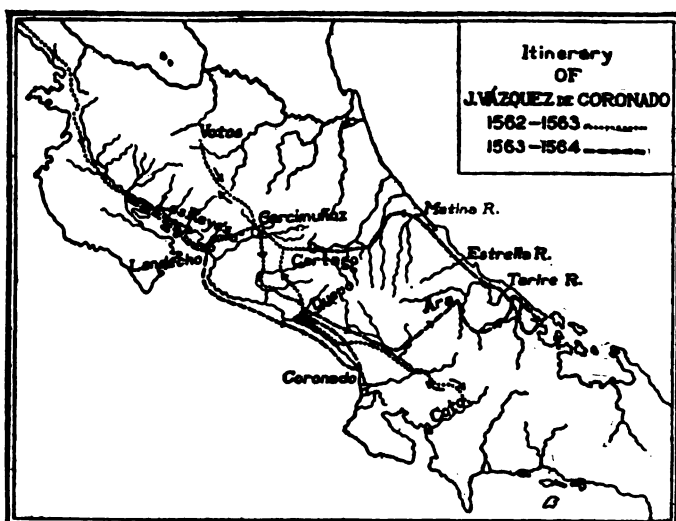
²⁴ "And later, according to the record, the said Joán Vázquez caused one or two to be quartered." Declaration of the *Licenciado* Antonio de Olivera, *alcalde* of the Holy Brotherhood. Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VI, pp. 498-499.

in his honor that in all the history of the conquest of America there is perhaps no record of a more humane and less avaricious captain. Among a multitude of acts may be cited the instance of his ordering to be buried the only chain brought by his soldiers for use in the imprisonment of the *caciques*. No less eloquent is the testimony of an illustrious Franciscan, who cannot be taxed with partiality, for the severity of the members of this order against the *conquistadores* is well known. Fray Pedro de Betanzos writes from Garcimuñoz to the king on June 30th, 1563: ²⁵ "And for the pacification of this country your Royal *Audiencia* installed a gentleman from Guatemala who calls himself Johán Vázquez de Coronado, a native of Salamanca. I had thought the method of conquest adopted by him and his soldiers was that which had prevailed in the past—by killing and robbing these poor people—and with this in mind, I hastened my coming in order to interpose in their behalf. I found, however, that he was considerate and that his scheme of conquest was as beneficial as that of the religious orders, who have more consideration for these natives. Your Majesty ought to know, and give thanks therefor to Our Lord, that in all the Indies no con-

* León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VII, p. 10.

quest has been more blameless or cast less of a burden of remorse upon the royal conscience of your Majesty than this."

On his arrival the *Alcalde mayor* found at Cartago another Franciscan whose name to-day enjoys universal fame—Fray Lorenzo de Bien-



venida who, in company with Fray Diego de Salinas and Fray Melchor de Salazar, had come from Guatemala.

The work accomplished by Vázquez de Coronado merits the high praise, not alone for the boldness and energy displayed by that leader, able as he was to overcome obstacles, which even with the greater facilities of the present day ap-

pear insurmountable, but also because of the manner in which he brought that work to a conclusion. His policy, always friendly and prudent, proved to be his best auxiliary, and he was thus enabled to overrun great stretches of territory, peopled by hostile tribes accustomed for years to triumph over the Spaniards, without the loss of a single man—proof positive that, in the majority of cases, the Indians only took up arms to defend their lives and property, and that their submission was obtained more effectively by kindness and justice than by swords and lances. The fidelity and love shown by them towards Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz when that leader was imprisoned and disgraced, demonstrate their appreciation of kindly treatment.

Nevertheless, conquests by honorable and Christian methods, far from enriching their captains, brought them only wretchedness. In the conquest of Costa Rica, Juan Vázquez de Coronado expended more than twenty thousand *pesos*, and, as this upright leader looked for his recompense to the rich gold washings of the Estrella River rather than the spoliation of the Indians, he failed to recover his outlay and the moment arrived when his resources were exhausted. He was then forced to resort to the expedient of casting himself on the generosity of the King. Experience had taught, however,

that to secure favor from the King, it was necessary to follow the example of Pedro de Alvarado, Hernán Cortés and other captains and repair in person to court. And as the *Cabildo* and the inhabitants of Cartago desired also something more substantial than a mere royal message of thanks, they agreed with Vázquez de Coronado that he must go to Spain. He set out, accompanied by the *Alguacil mayor*, Diego Caro de Mesa, and the *Alcaldes ordinarios*, Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa and Pedro Alonso Cano. In their turn, the Franciscans resolved to send along with him to the court Fray Lorenzo de Bienvenida, that he might add his story to the account of what had taken place and seek assistance for the work of religious instruction. It is more than probable that the favorable testimony given by this virtuous priest contributed largely to the excellent reception the humane *conquistador* met with at the hands of Philip II.

On the 4th of April, 1565, upon him and his descendants that monarch conferred the title of *Adelantado* of the Province of Costa Rica, with an annual salary of a thousand *pesos*, and, on the 8th of the same month, appointed him Governor with a further salary of two thousand *pesos* in gold to be obtained from the mines. Diego de Caro de Mesa received an enlargement

of his coat of arms,²⁶ and the *Alguacilazgo mayor* for life over the *Cabildo* of Cartago. On the 7th of August, 1565, this city received from the King a royal decree conveying his thanks for the services rendered by its citizens in discovery, conquest and settlement,²⁷ and on the 17th, at the solicitation of Diego de Caro de Mesa, he bestowed upon it a shield with armorial bearings.²⁸

On the other hand, and doubtless because of his disagreements with Vázquez de Coronado, the Padre Estrado Rávago, deserving as he was of reward, failed utterly to achieve the miter—so long the goal of his ambition. On the contrary, Philip II., by royal decree of the same year,²⁹ addressed to the Padre Don Luis de Fuentes, Bishop of Nicaragua, confirmed the decree of May 9, 1545, in which he ordered the prelate of that province to attend to the spiritual needs of Costa Rica.

²⁶ Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 376; Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles—*Nobiliario de Conquistadores de Indias*, p. 68.

²⁷ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 392.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 393; Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, *ibid.*, p. 201. "A shield with two divisions: in the upper, on a red field, a lion rampant poised for a spring, bearing on its head a crown and with three blood red bars; in the lower division, beneath the above, a golden castle on a field of blue; about the border of the shield were ranged six black eagles on a field of silver, and for a heraldic device a large golden crown with the motto, "*Fide et Pace*."

²⁹ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 382.

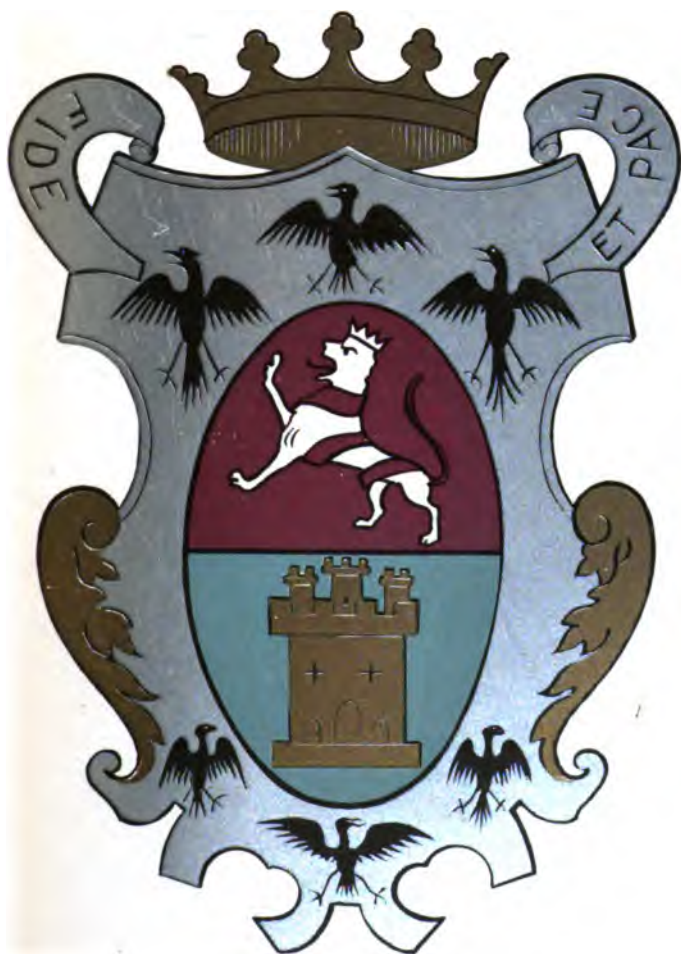
Nor did the King forget the Fray Lorenzo de Bienvenida. To him he gave from the royal coffers five hundred ducats for the purchase of church ornaments and bells, and all the wine and oil that would be needed for the space of six years by the convents that were proposed to be founded in Costa Rica.³⁰ For this service he had assigned thirteen benevolent friars. In the beginning of 1566 Fray Lorenzo arrived at Cartago, however, with but two of the Friars—the other eleven fell by the wayside, some in Spain and others in the Grand Canary.³¹

Satisfied by the honors bestowed upon him by the King, Juan Vázquez de Coronado, with renewed enthusiasm and courage, prepared to return to Costa Rica. Fifty-two volunteers offered to go with him, among whom were numerous distinguished *caballeros* of Salamanca, and from the King he sought permission to take along thirty husbandmen, of whom only eight reached Sanlúcar de Barrameda, where all were to have been sent aboard the armada of Don Cristóbal de Eraso, which was bound for Tierra Firme. On the 4th of October, 1565, Juan Vázquez de Coronado wrote to the King from the port stating that the ships were ready to set sail.³² The departure must have taken

³⁰ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 387.

³¹ León Fernández—*ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 144.

³² Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 387.



ARMS OF THE CITY OF CARTAGO.
Granted by King Philip II., August 14, 1565.

place shortly afterward, for on the 22nd it is recorded that the armada took refuge in Cádiz from a storm. But the *San Josepe*, which carried the *Adelantado* and his companions, was lost in the tempest,³³ with all on board.³⁴

It is reasonable to suppose that if Vázquez de Coronado had been able to return to Costa Rica, the fate of the province would have been far different. It must be said, however, that in those times the opinion prevailed among many that the reports made by him to Philip II. concerning the number of Indians inhabiting Costa Rica and the great riches of the Estrella River were much exaggerated and that for this reason his failure had been expected.³⁵

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 798.

³⁴ Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa was not aboard this ship.

³⁵ This opinion was expressed by Juan Dávila in a relation he sent to Philip II. in 1566: "Returning a second time Juan Vázquez de Coronado claimed to have discovered a river of great richness to which he gave the name of Estrella and from which he said he had extracted a quantity of gold. After his discovery he set out to bring the news to Your Highness, and, as I have understood from persons who have appeared at your royal court, the said Vázquez reported to Your Highness a larger quantity than in truth existed; wherefore, it seems to me that if he had reached Costarrica with such a galaxy of gentlemen and nobles as he had with him and they had found themselves deceived, this deception would have resulted in their killing him or perpetrating upon him some act of madness, as has been done in these parts with those who have worked against your royal interests."

CHAPTER XIV

MIGUEL SÁNCHEZ DE GUIDO AND PEDRO VENEGAS DE LOS RÍOS—CONSPIRACY AMONG THE INDIANS TO REGAIN THEIR LIBERTY—THE CITY OF CARTAGO IN DANGER—PERAFÁN DE RIBERA SUCCEEDS VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO—PUNISHMENT OF THE REBELS—ILLEGAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE INDIANS—PERAFÁN DE RIBERA SETS OUT FOR THE ESTRELLA RIVER—CAPTAIN JUAN SOLANO IN THE VALLEY OF THE GUAYMÍ—MUTINY OF THE SOLDIERS—PERAFÁN CROSSES THE GREAT CORDILLERA IN THE DIRECTION OF THE PACIFIC AND REACHES THE CHIRIQUÍ VALLEYS—THE CITY OF NOMBRE DE JESÚS—FAILURE OF PERAFÁN DE RIBERA

(1565-1573)

WITH the advent of Miguel Sánchez de Guido, governor *ad interim*, after the departure of Vázquez de Coronado, whose ceaseless activity had kept the incipient colony constantly on the move, the inhabitants of Cartago hoped for a period of repose while they were expecting the return of the *Conquistador* from court, bearing with him the rewards the King could do no less than bestow on such worthy servants.

But, although the climate of Guarco was refreshing and most benign and the valley picturesque and fertile, many of the essential ele-

ments for a quiet life were lacking. Provisions were always scarce and there was constant recurrence of outbreaks among the Indians, who could no longer endure being forced to serve and provide nourishment for the intruders who had come to despoil them of their liberty and the fruits of their labor. Wearied of the constant struggle, many of the *conquistadores* lost patience and sought other fields of adventure. The province would thus have become wholly depopulated but for the arrival of Pedro Venegas de los Ríos, treasurer of Nicaragua, who was appointed *Alcalde mayor, ad interim*, of Costa Rica, in the absence of Vázquez de Coronado. Ríos brought with him provisions for the inhabitants, and settlers to repeople the city.

The news of the *Adelantado's* death put an end to the hopes that had been builded upon the capacity of this intelligent and generous chief, and it is not strange that so unfortunate an event should contribute to the increasing discontent of the Indians, who had looked upon him as a bulwark of protection against the rapacity and cruelty of the invaders. The greater part of them fled to the mountains to escape the slavery to which they had been subjected, and, finally, the Indians of Guarco, Turrialba, Ujarraz, Corrosí and Atirro joined in a secret confederation for the immediate extermination of

the Spaniards and the recovery of their independence. Of this conspiracy a *cacique* called Turichiquí, who lived in the Ujarraz valley, was the principal leader.

The plot hatched, Turichiquí sent word to Pedro Venegas de los Ríos towards the end of February, 1568, inviting him to his village on the pretext of adjusting the allotment of lands for settlement by certain rebellious Indians then at large in the forests and who desired to come in and surrender. Wholly unsuspecting of the trap laid for him, the *Alcalde mayor* set out with ten men and some Indian servants. He was well received by the *cacique*, lodged in the *cacique's* own house and served with refreshments. At the conclusion of the repast, the Indians proceeded to execute a war dance in honor of Venegas de los Ríos, armed with stone battle axes, as was their custom. The Spaniards were being greatly diverted by the dance, when, suddenly, one of the leaders gave an order. On hearing it, the Indians broke out into war cries and, at this signal, were joined by many others, who rushed from their ambush among the reeds on the bank of a near-by river, and fell upon the Spaniards. The latter drew their swords and bravely defended themselves, but the conspirators succeeded in killing two half-breeds and a number of Indian servants and seriously wound-

ing two soldiers. Effecting a retreat, the *Alcalde mayor* returned to Cartago with his wounded.

After this, the insurrection became general. The city of Cartago found itself in a most critical situation, its inhabitants few in number and the confederated Indians threatening attack. For better defense, the populace fortified itself in the church, which was the most substantial structure in the town, and, notice having been received of the approach of the new governor, despatched messengers to speed his arrival.

On the death of Juan Vázquez de Coronado, Philip II. had named as Governor of Costa Rica (July 19, 1566) Pedro Afán de Ribera, a scion of the house of the Duke of Alcalá, *Adelantado mayor* of Andalusia.¹ Perafán (Pedro Afán), a native of Castile, was a man then some seventy-five years of age, and had been in Honduras since 1527. Under the orders of Andrés de Cereceda (Gil González Dávila's treasurer in the expedition into Costa Rica and Nicaragua), he had assisted in the conquest of Naco, and later had figured in important public offices, such as that of lieutenant governor of Trujillo, where he enrolled himself as a citizen. With the sack-ing of that city, in 1559, by the French corsairs, Perafán had become a ruined man, and the King,

¹ Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 208.

by way of recompense for his services, had appointed him Governor of Costa Rica.

From Honduras he had entered Costa Rica by way of Nicoya and Chomes, with his family and a few soldiers, and more than four hundred head of cattle that he had brought from Choluteca, and, proceeding overland, had founded the city of Aranjuez² and the port of Ribera, en route.³ When he learned of the precarious condition of Cartago, he hastened his march and succeeded, with thirty or forty men, in reaching the beleaguered city in time to relieve it, in the month of March, 1568. These reinforcements enabled the Spaniards to take the offensive, and to make sorties in search of the food of which the city stood in desperate need. Antonio Pereyra led a foray into the villages of Atirro, Turrialba, Corrosí and Cuquerrique⁴ and brought them again under submission. Later, the same captain penetrated into the province of the Abra, or Currirabá,⁵ and entered Barba, Ujarraz and Toyopán, and, locating his camp in the valley of La Cruz, gathered from the surrounding

²On the banks of the Aranjuez River and near the site of the ancient town of Bruselas.

³At the mouth of the river where Puntarenas now is.

⁴Tucurrique.

⁵This province of the Abra, or Currirabá, also called Porrosquiría, occupied the valley of Curridabat, and was bordered on the west by Aserri, on the east by Ujarraz (Porroscriés) and on the northwest by Tices and Barba.

plantations a considerable quantity of maize. As a result of other expeditions that were made against the various villages, all returned to their allegiance.

The uprising had spread as far as the provinces of Pococí and Auyaque, which had been discovered and subjugated by Vázquez de Coronado. Perafán, therefore, resolved to send his son Don Diego López de Ribera, whom he had appointed lieutenant to the Governor,⁶ to pacify that country. The young leader set out with fifty men, among them the famous captains Juan Solano and Alvaro de Acuña, who for many years were noted as the first *conquistadores* of Costa Rica, until, indeed, the investigations of Don León Fernández and Don Manuel M. de Peralta dispelled the error propagated by the Guatemalan historian, Domingo Juarros, and other Central Americans who followed in his wake.⁷ Don Diego López de Ribera accomplished his task with but little difficulty.

⁶This appointment was disapproved by Royal Decree of October 29, 1569.

⁷Juarros—*Historia de la Ciudad de Guatemala*, Vol. II, p. 197; Felipe Molina—*Bosquejo de Costa Rica*, pp. 10 and 81; Montúfar—*Reseña Histórica*, Vol. I, p. 300.

Juan Solano came to Costa Rica with the *Licenciado* Cavallón in 1560, and Alvaro de Acuña arrived in about 1564. The latter's name appears in the list of those proscribed in 1562 for having declared in favor of the tyrants Hernando de Guzmán and Lope de Aguirre in Peru.

It is curious to note that in spite of the conclusive works of

The province pacified, Perafán was called upon to overcome a more serious obstacle in order to carry through his project of founding a settlement on the Estrella River, for the soldiers, anxious to secure the coveted reward for their labors, threatened to quit the country unless the Indians were parceled out among them. From the very beginning of the conquest, all had claimed the right to this distribution, Vázquez de Coronado⁸ included; the *Cabildos* of Garcimuñoz and Cartago had petitioned for it. In 1562 the Bishop of Nicaragua wrote to the King, making clear the necessity of such an apportionment among the *conquistadores*.⁹ The *Licenciado* Landecho, President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, addressed two letters to Philip II. to the same end,¹⁰ but the system of apportionment conceived by Columbus had produced such evil results, and the Padre Las Casas and other virtuous men had protested with such energy against this form of slavery which lent itself to so many abuses and cruelties, that the Spanish Crown, at last aroused to pity, resolved to put

Señores Fernández and Peralta, the Central American historians continue to perpetrate this error of Juarros as well as the no less serious mistake of saying that Don Jorge de Alvarado, brother of Don Pedro, took part in the conquest of Turrialba and Suerre in 1530.

⁸ Ricardo Fernández Guardia—*Cartas de Juan Vázquez de Coronado*, p. 39.

⁹ Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 210.

¹⁰ León Fernández—MSS.

an end to it by means of laws for the protection of the Indians.

In some measure these laws did prove to be a bridle on the adventurers who had been devastating these American countries under the pretext of diffusing the light of the Evangelists—though a weak one, because, for the most part, the invaders had no other purpose than that of enriching themselves by despoiling the unhappy Indians. If to Cavallón and Vázquez de Coronado credit must be given for conducting their conquest of Costa Rica within the restrictions imposed by the Crown, this cannot be said of others, such as Juan Pérez de Cabrera, who preferred to abandon his conquest because he was not permitted to carry it through with fire and sword.

As a result of his prohibition against the apportionment of the Indians—since they had long been looked upon as lawful prize by the *conquistadores*—the King was obliged, in justice, to assume the responsibility for the expeditions and to pay salaries to those who undertook them under his banner; otherwise the *conquistadores* would have been ruined as had been the case with those of Costa Rica whom Perafán found in extreme poverty and more insistent than ever in their demands that the Indians be parceled out among them. With this object in view, the

Cabildo and citizens of Cartago had recourse to the *Audiencia* which for the second time the King had established in Panama, in 1568, to supersede that of Guatemala. This new *Audiencia* exercised jurisdiction from the Bay of Fonseca, exclusive, and the Ulúa River, to the Darién River (Atrato), exclusive, and consequently the Provinces of Nicaragua and Costa Rica were under its control. The *Audiencia* consented to remunerate the *conquistadores*, but in the form established by the laws and ordinances governing the subject; that is to say, the Indian villages or tribes were to be placed in direct dependence upon the Crown, and for each was prescribed the amount of tribute to be paid in, and, out of the fund made up from this levy, an annual stipend was to be paid to each of the grantees. It is true that this arrangement most effectively enslaved the Indians, but it at least prevented their direct exploitation by actual masters—an evil that had been as merciless as it was unjust for them.

By an order of the 10th of February, 1568, the *Audiencia* directed Perafán to notify the *conquistadores* of Costa Rica of the annual sums they were to receive conformably with the individual merits and rank of each. This provision only evoked a general protest, for what all demanded were grants of unrestricted rights over the Indians, such as had been enjoyed in times

past by the Spaniards in the conquered American countries. The Governor, however, was not empowered to make such grants and he so informed the *conquistadores*. The latter rejoined that unless the Indians should be turned over to them, they would abandon the province in a body, whereupon Perafán pronounced the severest penalties against the deserters, but eventually yielded to the demands of the inhabitants, knowingly committing a violation of the law for which he ran the risk of bringing down on his own head a severe punishment. In January, 1569, therefore, he parceled out the Indians among his people, that is, he gave to each Spaniard a certain number of slaves. This distribution was made effective in all the villages discovered up to that moment.¹¹

In order to screen, as far as possible, the irregularity of the Governor's action and give to the transaction some semblance of legality, the *Cabildo* of Cartago,¹² on the 4th of January, adopted a resolution directing Perafán to remunerate the *conquistadores* for their services and turn over to them the Indian villages—in

¹¹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 3.

¹² This *cabildo*, or municipal council, was composed of Pedro Afán de Ribera, son of the Governor, and Esteban de Mena, *alcaldes ordinarios*, Jerónimo de Barros, royal treasurer, Captain Juan Solano, agent and overseer for the Crown, Juan Mejía de Valladares and Juan Aznar de la Guarda, *regidores*, and Juan de Zárate, procurator.

consideration of the fact that "the citizens now being and residing in this city and in these provinces have discovered by their own enterprise and at their own expense, and by their labors, extending over a period of eight years, settled and pacified these provinces; that they have brought under submission to His Majesty many domains and have discovered yet others; that no recompense whatever has been given them in the name of His Majesty in accordance with promises made to them in his name and in accordance with the common practice throughout the Indies; that nowhere else has such great labor been performed nor such dilatoriness shown in the matter of reward for merit and services, and that all are now in great need and without the wherewithal for their support; wherefore they are meditating the abandonment of this city and province."

Esteban de Mena and Juan Solano were commissioned to call upon the Governor and request his presence at the *Cabildo*. Perafán accepted the invitation and repaired to the council in the company of various of the leading citizens. The procurator, Juan de Zárate, served him with the copy of the resolution in the name of the *Cabildo* and the citizens of the city, and informed him that all of the gentlemen and soldiers were reduced to nakedness, and were unshod and hungry. He was also told how they had all labored in the

service of the King, and they showed him, besides, various documents in which they had been assured of reward. For answer Perafán stated that he would consult his instructions and that in a short time he would determine what was most expedient from the viewpoint of God and the King. On the following day he called upon the *Cabildo* for a detailed statement of all the Indian villages which had declared their allegiance, in order, he said, "in conformity with the orders of His Majesty, to bring them under the royal crown and levy a tax upon them, and, from the proceeds of this tax, to give to each a certain sum, to be apportioned according to his rank and the worth of his labors."

As has been said, this arrangement was what was ordered by the King and what Perafán should have carried out; but it is quite evident that at bottom he was in accord with the citizens, who were opposed to any adjustment that would interfere with their unrestricted exploitation of the Indians. The *Cabildo* reassembled on the 8th of the same month and declared that, under the conditions then existing, the province would soon be depopulated, for the recompense proposed was not sufficient. For a second time the Governor was called in. The disadvantages of his plan were set forth, and, in order to bring the matter to an end, a farce was enacted, apparently

with the Governor's permission, and possibly at his direct instigation: ¹⁸ on the 10th of January, at dawn, many of the soldiers assembled in the plaza with their arms and horses, and threatened to take their departure unless the apportionment of the Indians were conceded to them.

The Governor took measures to prevent their going, and, that very day, in view of the gravity of the situation, summoned the treasurer, Jerónimo de Barros, Captain Juan Solano and the Fray Juan Pizarro, superior of the convent of San Francisco. Having made clear to them the critical state of the province and informed them that in consideration of the request submitted by the *Cabildo* he was disposed to recompense the services of the citizens, on condition, however, that it be made in conformity with his instructions, Barros and Solano declared that the remedy proposed was insufficient and that the soldiers, already in the saddle, would surely leave. When the opinion of the Father Superior was asked he said: "It would be better to partition the land so that it may not remain unsettled and abandoned, because, on the one hand, no longer is the Lord our God or His Majesty served in these regions—indeed the reverse is true, for the natives have reverted to the abominations practiced in connection with their idols, their

¹⁸ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 434.

dead, and their sacrifices—and, on the other hand, it is evident that much good may be accomplished by this means in the salvation of the souls of these infidels, for, as Saint Gregory says, no greater service can be rendered our Lord God than by bringing to His holy attention souls that have gone astray.”

After hearing the counsel of Saint Gregory, there was no further vacillation. On the 12th of January, the Governor decreed the apportionment of the Indians. Nevertheless, the real *conquistadores* considered that they had been tricked, for Perafán had bestowed the best allotments upon his own relatives and the people who had come with him from Honduras, among whom were not a few *mestizos* and mulattoes; so the old residents wrote to Philip II., transmitting complaints, and the Governor having caused the letters to be held up at the ports, the *Cabildo* commissioned Jerónimo de Villegas to proceed to Panama and complain of this discrimination before the *Audiencia*. From that city, Villegas wrote to the King in June, 1569,¹⁴ making charges against Perafán, and, as late as 1577, Fray Lorenzo de Bienvenida was protesting against his inequitable action: “Thus passed Perafán de Ribera who was your Majesty’s Governor in these provinces. He it was who parti-

¹⁴ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 433.

tioned the entire land among a little more than forty Spaniards and the greater part of these men were *mestizos*, negroes, and other peoples of the lower order, and, seeing how irregularly the apportionment was made all honorable men took their departure; and the forests, rivers and rocks were delivered over to the control of the Spaniards; and to children under age he gave the Indians. This province cannot be appeased unless a further apportionment is made to the meritorious." ¹⁵

The hope of enriching themselves, however, doubtless tended to calm the discontent among the soldiers. They finally resolved to follow the Governor, who, undaunted by the great difficulties involved in such an enterprise or by his advanced age and infirmities, was pledged to found a settlement on the banks of the famous Estrella River. The necessary preparations concluded, Perafán set out towards the North Sea in the beginning of January, 1570, with sixty-eight Spaniards and a sufficient force of Indian men and women servants, leaving behind in the city thirty soldiers and a priest under the orders of Antonio Alvarez Pereyra. Forming part of the expedition were the officers of the royal treasury, the Padres, Fray Martín de Bonilla and Fray Juan Pizarro, and the wife and sons of Perafán.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 550.

Don Diego López de Ribera was appointed Captain-General, and Juan Solano, Ensign-Major. Besides a large quantity of provisions and clothing, the Governor carried along a number of cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens.

Reversing the course followed by Vázquez de Coronado, the expedition passed through Corrosí, Atirro, Teotique, Chirripó, Pococí, Auyaque, Moyagua, Tariaca, Ciruro, and the Mexicans or Cicuas, leaving all these provinces in peace; but on reaching the Estrella River, they found that the native houses had been burned, for the Indians, on learning of the approach of the Spaniards, had cut down the fruit trees, destroyed the fields and retreated into the forests.

Only two *caciques* could be found and these refused to supply Indians for service. Perafán caused some huts to be built on the bank of the river and despatched Juan Solano to Terbi and Quequexque for provisions, but the failure of the food supply and the desire to set off in search of the Guaymí valley, which had been famed for its riches, decided him to pursue the journey, although against the will of many of the soldiers, and they arrived at Coxerán (also called Coxerinducagua).¹⁶ On the way, they were called upon to perform great labors, for they were forced to open a road and to carry the impedi-

¹⁶ In Almirante Bay.

menta on their backs for lack of burden-bearers, although they were recompensed by finding a good supply of maize in the village, and for some time maintained their camp at that place whilst numerous excursions were made into the surrounding country to bring the Indians into captivity. None, however, was caught.

Fray Augustín de Ceballos¹⁷ relates that Sergeant-Major Muñoz¹⁸ went into the hills of Corotapa and took from some huts "a quantity of gold sufficient to fill two of the chests in which nails and iron implements from Castile were stored," and that, greedy for more, he sought to penetrate farther into the interior and left his horde of gold cached at the foot of a tree. He had barely gone a league's distance when he was fallen upon by Indians in such numbers that he was compelled to retire with the loss of several soldiers, and "leaving his heart behind him at the foot of the tree with his two chests of gold."

With the same difficulties confronting him that had been encountered in reaching Coxerán, and having also to contend against hostile tribes, the Governor proceeded to the camp they called El Real de los Caballos (The Camp of the Horses), for there it became necessary to eat the horses

¹⁷ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 156.

¹⁸ Francisco Muñoz Chacón.

brought along by the expedition. Hunger became so intense that they were driven to sustaining themselves on unknown herbs and roots, and even dogs and beetles. The Governor, who, in spite of his advanced years, did not spare himself fatigue, set out in person with thirty men to explore the surrounding country in search of some means of bettering conditions at the camp. Though on the march eighteen soldiers deserted, he continued with the remaining twelve and had the good fortune to find maize plantations in the village of Arariba, and immediately despatched a messenger to bring thither his people.

In the meantime a serious upheaval had taken place in the camp. The discontent engendered among some by the abandoning of the settlement on the Estrella River became each day more acute. Great insubordination reigned among the soldiers, who refused to obey the orders of their leaders, claiming that they had received no pay from the King and that their agreement provided only that they should reach the Estrella, and there were not lacking among them some who spoke of going over to the Governor of Veragua. For lack of any other, these murmurings became the "daily bread" of the camp. From the very beginning, indeed, a soldier named Vicente del Castillo had said, on the plain of Corrosí, that "if it should develop that there is

no gold in the Estrella River, wrangling will be seen in the camp." ¹⁹

This soldier was one of those who deserted Perafán on the road to Arariba. Not content with this, on his return to the Camp of the Horses, he with others hatched out a plot to abandon their comrades. The plan was to escape by night, accompanied by several Indian servants, who were to carry the provisions that had been left at Coxerán and which they proposed to stop for on their way, but Alonso de Guido, informed of the plot, hurried to awaken the Master of the Camp, Alonso Rodríguez Franco, and that officer went at once from mess to mess to placate the mutineers, and begged them to await the return of the Governor. They replied with insolence and contempt, yet the Master of the Camp did not dare to discipline or disarm them, for the entire camp was in a turbulent state. Only a heavy shower, falling during the night, prevented the desertion; later the mutiny was effectively quieted by the arrival of news that the Governor had found the village and that provisions had been secured.

Afterward the camp was removed to Arariba, but when the Spaniards went back for the supplies, which had been left at the Camp of the Horses, they were found to be worthless. On

¹⁹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. III, p. 203.

the arrival at the village, the Indians, who had deserted it, soon returned and attacked the expedition. After a hotly contested battle resulting in the death of many Indians, victory rested with the Spaniards. These events occurred in the beginning of June, 1570. From Arariba the Captain Juan Solano set out and penetrated as far as the plains and valley of the Guaymí.²⁰ Great hardships were experienced on this journey, during which Alvaro de Acuña distinguished himself by being swept down stream in the Baxca River by a sudden freshet while building a bridge and nearly losing his life. Seven months had gone by since the departure from Cartago—seven months of the severest labor, of hunger and struggle against the natives, and the soldiers saw no end to their sufferings, much less the coveted riches they had been promised. Instead, they found themselves immersed farther and farther each day in the enormous forest, impeded by deep marches and rivers abounding in rapids. To all this were added the deadly effects of the climate, the heavy rains and the lack of Indians for service. Under such conditions it is not strange that the idea of desertion continued to grow in Perafán's camp.

The attempts to escape at the Estrella and at

²⁰ To the south of the Island of Escudo de Veragua.

the Camp of the Horses, the treachery on the road to Arariba, had all remained unpunished, and this very toleration, whether forced or voluntary on the part of the Governor, served to encourage the discontented ones. At Arariba they thought of a new plan for making their escape and an effort was made to put it into execution. The camp was located on the bank of a river it was necessary to cross in order to return to Cartago. The river was wide and there were no means of fording it, so, on the 2d of August, ten or twelve began in secret to construct a bridge that would enable them to get over with their baggage, but a companion having denounced them to Perafán, he had them seized in *flagrante delictu* and proceeded against them for treason.

To clear themselves, the men avowed their purpose to have been to go in search of *pejibayes*, pumpkins and *chile* on the opposite shores, where these fruits were to be found. The Governor, who was determined to make an example of the mutineers in order, by a single blow, to put an end to insubordination, named the Master of the Camp as judge, and, the following day, August 3rd, Martín de Bujedo, Pedro Ramírez and Jorge de Colmenares were condemned to death. Luis González de Estrada and Esteban Ramos, attorneys for the accused, appealed from the

sentence to the King and the Council of the Indies. Perafán, as appears from the records of the scrivener, Francisco Muñoz Chacón, committed the case for trial at second instance to the Alférez General, Juan Solano, so that, by means of this illegality, it might reach him for decision at third instance. Again the attorneys appealed, praying him to send the case to a higher court. The Governor, however, confirmed his action and Captain Juan Solano adhered to his sentence of death on the 16th of August, although for the sake of appearances only as will be seen further along.

During the course of these proceedings matters had changed in aspect. As soon as the first decision was handed down by the Master of the Camp, the three condemned men complained that they were not the principal guilty ones and Martín de Bujedo confided to Doña Petronila, Perafán's wife, that the instigator of the mutiny was Diego López Nieto. The lady referred the matter to her son, Don Diego López de Ribera, who went to the prisoners and told them that they ought to discover the names of the leaders of the conspiracy, because in so doing they could perhaps save their own lives.

Made hopeful by these words, Bujedo, Ramírez and Colmenares told all they knew. It developed from their confessions that the leaders

of the mutiny had been Diego López and Vicente del Castillo. This, then, was Perafán's reason for modifying the sentence of death at third instance, on the 17th of August, and condemning the three offenders to labor for the King for three years in the Government of Costa Rica.

Diego López and Melchor de Salazar, who, it developed, was also compromised, managed to make their escape. Later they must have returned to camp, for the first named appears among the founders of the city of Nombre de Jesús and the second in the list of those killed by the Indians.²¹

Vicente del Castillo alone was arrested. Pedro de la Torre presented his defense, but, notwithstanding his vigorous efforts, the accused was condemned to death by the Governor on the 14th of August. Appeal having been denied either to the King or *Audiencia* of Panama, the sentence was executed the same day. Castillo, who had given evidence of great serenity during his imprisonment, protested to the last moment his innocence of the crime charged against him. Nevertheless to the gallows they carried him, with a rope about his neck, whilst a town crier proclaimed: "This is the justice meted out by His Majesty, and by the most illustrious

²¹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 42.

Lord Governor in his royal name, to this man as a mutineer, commanding that he be hanged for his crime; as he has acted, accordingly shall he pay." ²² On the steps of the gallows the culprit again protested his innocence and said to Fray Martín de Bonilla and Fray Juan Pizarro that "as to the predicament in which he found himself, and whether Our Lord should pardon him or not, he was not responsible for the things charged against him, nor had they given him any part in the mutiny, and that he died unjustly and he did not know why." ²³

The camp remained several months in Arriba. During this time Don Ruy López de Ribera and Captain Juan Solano explored the country. Ever in search of better ground on which to found a city, Perafán pushed on to the *palenque* of Corayca and there determined to cross the Cordillera towards the Pacific. The hardships were terrible; so great were the ravages of hunger that the expeditionaries were driven to the extremity of eating snakes and buzzards.²⁴ On the summits of the mountain ridge they encountered violent hurricanes and heavy rains and many of the Indians died from the cold. The Governor and his wife were so nearly frozen that it became necessary to have them carried on the

²² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 211.

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 213.

²⁴ Peralta—*ibid.*, p. 666.

backs of the porters, yet the expedition succeeded in making its way out into the plains of Chiriquí, and, passing by the villages of Duarca and Tarirama, came to a halt at the village of Tabiquirí,²⁵ the Indians of which belonged to the apportionment (*encomienda*) of Cristóbal de Abrego, a resident of Cartago.

On arrival at this village it was discovered that the vestments Fray Juan Pizarro had brought along for the celebration of mass were missing, and that the Indian who had had them in charge had been frozen to death in the passage over the Cordillera, and, as this loss was a great affliction to the *conquistadores*, a valiant soldier named Matías de Palacios volunteered to return for them. He found them lying among the bodies of those who had perished and at the end of three days, when he had himself been given up for dead, made his way back to camp. From Tabiquirí Perafán sent Don Diego López de Ribera in search of provisions and a suitable site for a city. The Lieutenant-General set out and proceeded until he came to a group of *palenques* located among the Biritecas,²⁶ adjacent to Nara, where he secured a large quantity of maize and other provisions of which there was great need.

²⁵ Near the Panaman city of David. Peralta—*Exposé des Droits territoriaux*, p. 85.

²⁶ Coto.

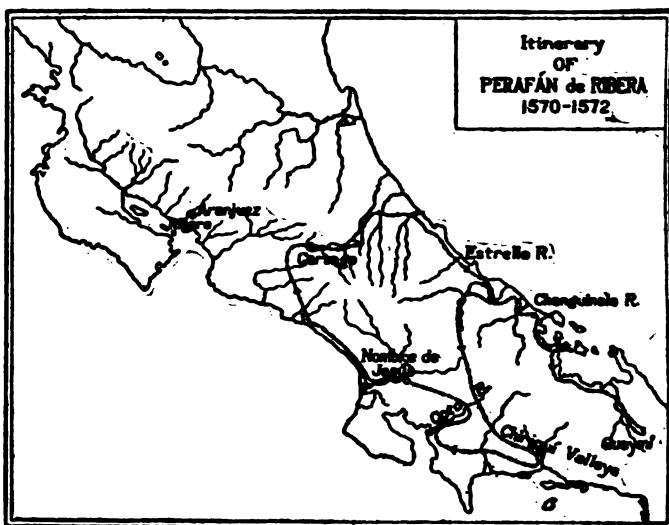
With the supplies found among the Biritecas, it became possible to go forward. Reaching Coto and Boruca, the Governor there founded, on the 6th of March, 1571, the city of Nombre de Jesús on the meadows bordering the Coto River, now called the Río Grande de Térraba, or Diquís River, "about five leagues from the village of Coto, eight from Ara and ten from the Bay of Coronado and Gulf of Dulce."²⁷ The limits of this city he established as extending "towards the city of Cartago as far as Quepo and its territory and included within its boundaries and limits Pococí and Aoyaque and Tariaca, Moyagua, Morore and Cicore, Mohoruboru and Cabeaza, and all of the province of Ara and Cicues and Téribi and Quequexque, Cuxerindicagua, Arariba, Zeburón, Baxca and Bioro and all of the province which we have so far discovered; and along the coast of the Southern Sea toward Natá to the limits of this government, in which are comprised Cobto and Boruca, Cía, Uriaba, Xarixaba, Yabo, Duarco, Tarima, Tabiquirí, Cabra and its territory, Bericala, Arexuxa and many other villages discovered and to be discovered."²⁸

On the founding of the city, a recount of the expedition was taken. Of the sixty-nine Span-

²⁷ León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 112.

²⁸ *Ibid.*—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 40.

iards who left Cartago, including the Governor, thirteen were missing: seven had met their deaths at the hands of the Indians and four through sickness, one had been drowned and another executed. The principal founders were Perafán, the Lieutenant-General, Don Diego López de



Ribera, the Master of the Camp, Alonso Rodríguez Franco, the Ensign-General, Juan Solano, the Auditor, Francisco Muñoz Chacón, the Agent and Inspector, Esteban Ramos Cervantes, and Don Ruy López de Ribera, President of the municipal council.

This city of Nombre de Jesús must have presented a sad yet curious spectacle—the people



ORNAMENTS OF DIFFERENT-COLORED STONES.
Worn as necklaces. In National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

wandering about unclothed, for their clothes had rotted on their bodies during their peregrinations of more than two years through the virgin forests, struggling incessantly against hunger, the terrible obstacles of nature and the opposition of the Indians. And all for what end? Only to arrive at the end of the journey a prey of the direst misery. For this valiant effort of Perafán profited no one; his labors were sterile and left no traces other than cruel sufferings and lives uselessly sacrificed.

The city once laid out and the sites partitioned, the Governor ordered Don Diego López de Ribera to go among the towns of the Spaniards and ask for help. He found that many great changes had occurred throughout the province. Since, from the time of his departure, no news of the expedition had been received, except a rumor of its loss, that had circulated among the Indians, the residents of Cartago had conveyed this information to the *Audiencia*, complaining at the same time of the maladministration of Pereyra and asking it for assistance in their great need, and, in order to prevent the depopulation of the province, the *Audiencia* had commissioned Hortún de Velasco to proceed to Costa Rica with supplies. On the return of the Lieutenant-General to Nombre de Jesús with the important news, Perafán decided to send him to Guate-

mala²⁹ to give an account to the *Audiencia* there of all that had occurred, and to make clear the horrible state of poverty in which the Governor and all the inhabitants were left. The *Audiencia*, though not accustomed to generosity, resolved, in view of the gravity of the circumstances, to concede to Perafán the *Corregimiento* of Nicoya, which had attached to it a salary of two hundred pesos a year, with the privilege of administering the office through the medium of a lieutenant; it also bestowed upon the soldiers five hundred *pesos* to be taken from the tributes of the Indians in Nicaragua on condition that they be paid for within three years.

In the beginning of 1572 the Governor returned to Cartago and in the same year effected the removal of that city to the site of the Mata Redonda, to-day known as Sabana, to the west of San José.³⁰ The townsmen, who had longed so ardently for the valley of the Guarco, did not find themselves any better off now that they were there. The town, founded in a soil of clay, was converted during the rainy season into a swamp, wherefore the nickname Ciudad del

²⁹ The 3rd of March, 1570, the *Audiencia* of Guatemala was reinstated anew. It had been reestablished by the law of 1567. The jurisdiction of this *Audiencia* embraced the provinces of Guatemala, Chiapas, Higueras, Verapaz, Cabo de Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

³⁰ León Fernández—*Historia de Costa Rica*, p. 116. Cleto González Víquez—*Apuntes*, 1st series, p. 92.

Lodo (City of the Mud) was bestowed upon it. Nevertheless some years later Cartago was reëstablished in the valley of the Guarco, although not to its original site.

In 1573, forced by hardships, Perafán finally renounced the government, and, abandoning the province, went to Guatemala, where he was unable to collect his salary of two thousand *pesos* or four hundred *maravedís*. In Costa Rica he had lost his wife and one son. In 1572, the *Audiencia* had administered to him a reprimand for not having admitted the appeals interposed by the attorneys in the proceedings at Arariba; and with regard to the illegal apportionments made by him in January, 1569, the same *Audiencia* had to confirm them on the 20th of July, 1592.

By whatever criterion this Governor may be judged, one can do no less than admire the extraordinary energy he displayed in his famous expedition at an age in which men are wont to think solely of repose; and it is hard to understand how an old man of nearly eighty years and bowed down with infirmities could have resisted such terrible fatigue and privations. Even more worthy of admiration was his aged wife, who, refusing to be separated from him, accompanied him through all his hardships until indeed she gave up her life.

On the departure of the Governor there remained in Costa Rica but two towns: Cartago with forty families, and Aranjuez, with fifteen. The great wealth of gold that had awakened such bright hopes remained undiscovered. Nor has it yet been brought to light.

CHAPTER XV

TALAMANCA, THE INDOMITABLE—PHILIP II. FIXES THE BOUNDARIES OF COSTA RICA—THE TUTELARY GENIUS OF AMERICA—THE CITY OF ARTIEDA AND THE GUAYMÍ VALLEY—FRANCIS DRAKE ON THE WEST COAST OF THE KINGDOM OF GUATEMALA—THE RUIN OF ARTIEDA RESULTING FROM THE HOSTILITY OF THE AUDIENCIA—CAPTAIN JUAN CABRAL EXPLORES ALMIRANTE BAY

1578-1591

THOUGH from a general viewpoint the conquest of Costa Rica is regarded as having ended with the disastrous expedition of Perafán de Ribera, the history of that conquest would not be complete without a relation of the great struggles that followed and which had for their theater the region about Talamanca, for the fierce inhabitants of that section were never reduced to vassalage in any permanent degree, either by force of arms or by the efforts of the missionaries to bring about their evangelization.

Talamanca is the name by which, since the first years of the 17th century, the Costa Rican territory situated in the southeastern extremity of the country has been known. This territory was then bounded on the north by the ancient district of Tierra Adentro, on the east

by the Caribbean Sea and the Province of Veragua, on the west by the Great Cordillera and on the south by the same Province of Veragua. During the domination of Spain, Talamanca extended as far as the island of the Escudo de Veragua and the Chiriquí or Calobébora River, which constituted for two and a half centuries the boundary between the Province of Costa Rica and that of Veragua, though since the proclamation of independence successive encroachments by Colombia have forced back the historic frontier to the line formed by the Sixaola River and its affluent, the Jorquín or Yurquín. This river Jorquín, until a few years ago, was believed to be the upper course of the Sixaola,¹ but the geographical error was dispelled by Dr. William M. Gabb, a noted American geologist, who, under the commission of the Costa Rican government, during the years 1878 to 1875 made a study of Talamanca² and discovered the true upper course of the Sixaola, the Indian name

¹In the 17th and 18th centuries the Spanish colonists in Costa Rica possessed exact knowledge of the entire course of the Tarire as a result of their frequent excursions into the territory of Talamanca, but this knowledge was lost in the 19th century because of the state of almost complete abandonment in which that territory was allowed to remain during the first period of the Republican régime.

²Dr. William M. Gabb—*Native Tribes and Idioms of Costa Rica*, in the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1875. *Exploración de Talamanca durante los años 1874-1875*, in the *Anales del Instituto Físico-Geográfico Nacional de Costa Rica*, Vol. V, 1892.

for which is Tarire.³ The Colombian Government gave the name of Culebras to this supposed stream Sixaola-Yurquín, and also that of Dorados, or Doraces.⁴ These two names are unknown in Costa Rica.

The Talamanca district of to-day, reduced as it is to its present narrow limits and despoiled of the splendid Almirante Bay and the no less beautiful Chiriquí Lagoon, is nevertheless as picturesque a region and possessed of greater natural riches than any in Costa Rica. It is without doubt the one in which were enacted the most important events in the colonial history of the country. From the circumstance that almost the entire population of Costa Rica is concentrated upon a strip running through the middle of its territory from one sea to the other, it results that the districts situated to the north and south of the Republic, and by which it borders on Nicaragua and Panama, respectively, remain almost wholly deserted with the exception of the Province of Guanacaste; yet it is unquestionably true that if the Spaniards had been able to estab-

³The Mosquitos gave to the lower course of the Tarire this name of Sixaola, which in their language signifies "Banana River."

⁴*El Repertorio Colombiano*, No. XLVIII. Bogotá, 1882. Don Pedro Fernández Madrid, in his report to the Colombian Government on the question of the boundaries with Costa Rica, dated November 29, 1852, identifies the Sixaola River with the Culebras.

lish themselves in Talamanca, that region to-day would be one of the most thickly populated, extensive and prosperous in the Republic.

That they did not succeed was certainly not for any want of force and perseverance; they failed only because, apart from the tenacious resistance of the Indians, there were such great natural obstacles, and because—why not say it?—of the extraordinary ill-fortune that attended all those who ventured anything in the original territory of Veragua. To the resistance of the Indians of Talamanca the historian Vázquez alludes when he writes of “the province of Costa Rica, where the Indians are so wild and warlike that they have defended themselves and repulsed the Spaniards and *conquistadores* with greater valor than any other nation of the Indies.”⁵

The territory of Talamanca, like the rest of Costa Rica, is mountainous in the extreme, covered with an exuberant tropical vegetation, and irrigated by an infinite number of rivers, though some of them are obstructed by very difficult rapids. The Tarire is navigable in its lower course, that is, in that part of the stream known as the Sixaola. It is this river that is the soul of the region; it is of the utmost importance because it constitutes the only natural highway

⁵ Fray Francisco Vázquez—*Crónica de Guatemala*, Book II, Chapter XIII.



TALAMANCA INDIANS NAVIGATING THE SIXAOLA RIVER.

for communication with the sea. With the rest of Costa Rica, Talamanca, as far as its geological formation, fauna, flora and ethnology are concerned, is in perfect harmony. In Chapter I of this history, data are given concerning its aborigines, of which there still exist two small tribes, united under the nominal authority of a single *cacique*, who bears the pompous title of King.⁶ This title is the last thing remaining of that independence which, with such valor and tenacity, the Indians of Talamanca were able to defend against the Spaniards. The data we possess concerning their life and customs during ancient times have been handed down to us by the missionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries. Among them were many who paid with their lives for their apostolic zeal.

The story of Christopher Columbus' discovery of the Talamanca country on the 6th of October, 1502, when he came to anchor in the Bay of Zoroboró, now called in his honor Almirante Bay, has already been told—how he established relations with the Indians on the coast, and afterwards made the discovery of Aburená Bay, or Chiriquí Lagoon, and of the river Guaiga, Calobébora, or Chiriquí, which later became the boundary between Talamanca and the Province of Veragua.

⁶ Effective authority is exercised by a *Jefe Político* (Sub-Governor) appointed by the Government of Costa Rica.

An account has also been given of the unfortunate adventures of the valiant Diego de Nicuesa in the island known as Cayo de Agua in the Chiriquí Lagoon, of Felipe Gutiérrez's passage through Almirante Bay, of Alonso Calero's experience in the same waters, of the vicissitudes of the first colony founded in Talamanca by Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz, in 1540, and of the failure of that established twenty years later by the good Padre Juan de Estrada Rávago at Bocas del Toro under the name of Castillo de Austria; also of the pacific conquest of Talamanca by Juan Vázquez de Coronado in the beginning of 1564, and of the reverses experienced by Perafán de Ribera in the same country a few years afterward.

It is unnecessary to dwell further upon these events. We shall, therefore, proceed with our narrative of those others that relate to the unfinished work of conquest during the colonial period—that is to say, to the struggles of the Costa Rican Spaniards against the Indians of Talamanca, when the province itself had been pacified and subjected to a régime of regular and stable government.

After Perafán de Ribera had abandoned his government of Costa Rica in 1578, the *Audiencia* of Guatemala appointed temporarily as his substitute Alonso de Anguciana de Gamboa,

one of the leading *conquistadores*, who had served under the orders of Estrada Rávago, Cavallón and Vázquez de Coronado. Anguciana de Gamboa, a rich gentleman of the city of Granada in Nicaragua, had been married to a niece of the *Licenciado* López Cerrato, the former president of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala. It appears that the Spaniards of Costa Rica sought his appointment in the hope that he would be able to resume the work interrupted by Perafán's disaster; but the new Governor *ad interim*, warned by the reverses suffered by his predecessor on the coasts of the Atlantic (the inhospitality of which he knew from his own experience), preferred to devote himself to a search for gold mines on the Pacific slopes. The result was unfortunate, for in this enterprise he sank some twenty thousand *pesos*. He moved, however, the site of the city of Cartago to the one it occupies to-day and founded at the mouth of the Suerre or Reventazón River a port to which he gave the name Castillo de Austria in commemoration of the second settlement of that name, established in the same place, by the Padre Estrada Rávago after the failure of the first attempt at Bocas del Toro. This third Castillo de Austria met no better fate than its two predecessors.

In the meanwhile, as may well be imagined, Philip II. and his Council of the Indies did not

lose sight of the famed riches of Costa Rica, when we consider that in spite of the calamities attending the *conquistadores* the King renewed his interest. On the 18th of December, 1573, therefore, he delivered a *capitulación* to Captain Diego de Artieda Chirino, whose chief object was to found an important establishment in the rich gold country situated to the southeast of Costa Rica which had been conquered by Juan Vázquez de Coronado. Under this *capitulación* the King confided to Artieda the discovery, pacification and settlement of Costa Rica, and fixed for all time, and with due precision, the boundaries of the province: latitudinally to extend from one sea to the other, and longitudinally from the *Corregimiento* of Nicoya as far as the Province of Veragua, including the Valley of Chiriquí on the Pacific, and from the river San Juan de Nicaragua as far as the same Province of Veragua on the Atlantic. By virtue of this delimitation, which was never subsequently modified by the Crown, Costa Rica lost the territory that extends along the Atlantic coast from the San Juan River to Honduras. The Province of Veragua referred to in the *capitulación* is that which had been formed out of the territory of the ancient duchy conceded to Don Luis Columbus in 1536, and which reverted to the control of the Crown twenty years later.

Diego de Artieda was a good soldier, who had served in the Islands of Poniente, or Philippines as they are now known, under the command of Miguel López de Legazpi, with the rank of Captain of Arquebusiers and Master of Camp, and had fought valiantly out there against the Portuguese. Philip II. appointed him Governor and Captain-General of Costa Rica for life, with succession to his son or heir, at a salary of two thousand ducats a year; also Governor of the Provinces of Nicaragua and Nicoya for four years, and *Alguacil mayor* of Costa Rica. On him was also conferred appellate jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters coming up from his subordinates, together with the right to appoint judges and civil, military and municipal authorities; also the right to subdivide the territory into *alcaldías mayores*, *corregimientos* and *alcaldías ordinarias*,⁷ and to coin money, found cities, construct fortifications, and partition the land into farms and into building lots, and to apportion the Indians. To him and his successors he also gave the rights in a pearl fishery and other fishery rights, and relief from the payment of duty of *almojarifazgo* ⁸ for the period of twenty years, a privilege that was also given to the entire body of inhabitants of Costa Rica

⁷ These terms have already been defined.

⁸ The ancient duty of four per cent. on importations and exportations.

for the period of ten years. As may be seen, the powers conferred upon Diego de Artieda by the Crown could hardly have been more ample.

On his part, the new Governor of Costa Rica obligated himself to sail from Spain with two ships and at least two hundred men, of whom one hundred were to be married, and all well provided with arms, and to explore all the coast of the province along the Atlantic from the San Juan River to the Province of Veragua, and from Nicoya to the same Province of Veragua on the Pacific side; also to take possession of these territories in the name of the King and reduce them to allegiance, to people three cities in Costa Rica—one at the Bocas del Drago, or Almirante Bay, another in the valley of the Guarco, in the interior of the country, and the third in Garabito, on the Pacific slope. He further undertook to bring into the province one thousand cows, fifteen hundred female sheep, five hundred pigs and goats and a thousand horses and mares within a period of three years.⁹

As this enterprise to which Captain Artieda proposed to devote himself was not only difficult but costly, it is more than probable that the necessary funds for carrying it through were supplied him, at least in part, by one of those companies which at the time had been formed for

⁹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 55.



ANTONIO SALDAÑA, LAST "KING" OF TALAMANCA.

such purposes and in which the members of the Council of the Indies were reputed to have been interested, since they were in a position to secure the most accurate information concerning such affairs.

Artieda sailed from the Port of San Lúcar de Barrameda on the 15th of April, with two ships and a tender, having more than fulfilled the conditions imposed by his *capitulación*. He was accompanied by three hundred and thirty-five persons, including men, women and children. Among these were several nobles and officers, various relatives of Artieda, a Bachelor of Arts, and two lawyers, one a son of a judge of the Commission on Commerce of the Indies (*Casa de Contratación de las Indias*).¹⁰ Anchor was dropped at the island of Española, where several of the company deserted; thence he proceeded on his voyage, laying his course toward Tierra Firme.

The principal object of Artieda's enterprise was, as has been said, the colonization of the territory in which Vázquez de Coronado had discovered the auriferous river called the Estrella—the same territory, formerly known as Veragua, which had formed the last of Christopher Columbus' illusions. But we have already seen how ill-starred had been the fortune of all those who up

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, p. 258.

to that time had set foot in that country—as though the tutelary genius of America had taken refuge there to make a last stand in defense of the independence of the western hemisphere—an irascible and cruel genius whose buffets before long the new *conquistador* was to receive in his turn.

Artieda arrived at the port of Bastimentos in Tierra Firme, and, having left there two ships under the command of Juan Ortiz Barriga, set out in the third for Nombre de Dios,¹¹ where he had the misfortune to be shipwrecked on the cliffs near that port. Returning then in a bark to Bastimentos, from thence he continued his voyage in the two remaining vessels. This first misadventure, however, was but a foreshadowing of what awaited him. At the mouth of the Belén River another ship was wrecked by running aground and those on board were barely able to save their lives, losing all that they possessed. After this the last remaining vessel was manned to its capacity and those who could not go aboard continued on foot to the mouth of the river San Juan de Nicaragua, suffering terrible hardships on the way, and from that place they made their way to the city of Granada.

The disaster was complete. Artieda, who had been obliged to save himself from the second

¹¹ Bastimentos and Nombre de Dios are neighboring ports.

wreck by swimming, lost everything he possessed, even his commission as Governor. Undaunted even by this, he soon had three vessels under construction in the shipyard at Granada, destined for the expeditions he was projecting to Almirante Bay and the Valley of the Guaymí—which was an undertaking that promised no small difficulties. Among them was one raised by the Governor of Veragua, who warned Artieda that as the Guaymí River was under his jurisdiction, the expedition must not enter it. Artieda wrote to the King, informing him of the claims set up by the Governor of Veragua. Thereupon Philip II., confirming the Council of the Indies, by royal decree of August 30, 1576, ordered the *Audiencia* of Guatemala to summon into its presence the Governors of Costa Rica and Veragua, and, after it should have considered their respective commissions, to determine to which of the two provinces belonged the Guaymí River, Almirante Bay and the Bocas del Drago (Dragon's Mouths). The decision of the *Audiencia* is not known, but it was unquestionably in favor of Artieda, for he carried out his enterprise with the consent of the *Audiencia* itself and the Crown, and without further opposition from the Governor of Veragua.

Arriving at Cartago on the 11th of Febru-

ary, 1576, Artieda sent to Nombre de Dios from Nicaragua a frigate loaded with the products of that province to be exchanged for necessities for his expedition. Always the victim of fatality, this frigate, however, together with another that accompanied it, was captured at the mouth of the San Juan River by some English pirates, who perpetrated the crime of castrating two Franciscan Friars who were making the voyage in them, and who died in consequence of their injuries. In May Artieda returned to Nicaragua, and, in November of the same year, the construction of the ships having been concluded, left Granada in two frigates, a barkentine and a launch, with sixty men and an adequate force of Indian servants, and put out to sea from the San Juan River, steering for the Bocas del Drago in search of the pirates. They, according to information he possessed, had settled in one of the islands in Almirante Bay, but he failed to find them, so returned to the continent, entered the Guaymí River (now called Chiricamola, or Cricamola) and two leagues and a half from its mouth founded the city of Artieda del Nuevo Reino de Navarra.¹² Shortly afterward, leaving the embryo colony in command of a deputy, Captain Francisco Pavón, he embarked anew for Nicaragua, where he arrived

¹² León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 91.

much weakened by illness. His purpose was to send men and provisions from this point to the new city. This he did, using a frigate that left Granada laden with all that was needed.

Captain Pavón, on the 5th of March, 1578, took possession of the Guaymí Valley, situated nine leagues, more or less, away from the city in the upper waters of the river of that name.¹³ This valley of the Guaymí was the same that Juan Vázquez de Coronado had searched for so diligently because of the riches for which it was famed, and had already been explored by Captain Juan Solano in 1570 under the orders of Perafán de Ribera. Here the Spaniards found some Indian huts and many plantations of maize and *pejibayes*. In the meanwhile, the Governor was already preparing to return to Costa Rica for the purpose of opening a road from the city of Cartago to that of Artieda, in order to give to the latter settlement the desired impetus, when he received imperative letters from the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, commanding him to appear before that body to answer certain accusations presented against him by various individuals of Nicaragua. This was the first manifestation of the ill will toward Artieda on the part of the always afterwards hostile *Audiencia* of Guatemala. The Governor set

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 93.

out immediately, but the charges against him turned out to be unfounded and the *Audiencia* was forced to absolve him. Nevertheless, as a result of his enforced absence from Nicaragua and Costa Rica, he was unable to give proper attention to the city of Artieda, and the inhabitants had dispersed by the end of 1578. Having returned to Nicaragua, however, Artieda was already at work rehabilitating his enterprise when an event of the gravest moment occurred to frustrate his plans.

On the 17th of March there had sailed from the port of Caldera in Costa Rica, with Panama as its destination, a vessel loaded with the products of the province, and carrying, among other passengers, two pilots sent by the Viceroy of Mexico for the run between Tierra Firme and China.¹⁴ On the 20th of the same month of March, while the ship was passing between the island of Caño and the coast, it was confronted by a small boat, manned by English corsairs, well armed, which made its appearance from a large cove.¹⁵ At that point was riding at anchor a big ship carrying fourteen guns of large caliber, its captain no less a person than Sir Francis Drake. Already this adventurer had

¹⁴ Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica, Nicaragua y Panamá*, p. 500.

¹⁵ Drake Bay, to the north of the peninsula of Osa.

penetrated into the Pacific through the Strait of Magellan, and, having sacked on his way the ports along the coast of South America, had just arrived off the coast of the Kingdom of Guatemala, and, continuing his triumphal voyage, made other captures along the coast of the Province of Guatemala and afterwards sacked the port of Acapulco in Mexico.

Although information received from every source indicated that it was the intention of the corsair to proceed to China, the *Audiencia* of Guatemala was of opinion that this was impossible and that after wintering at some port in the north, he would return. Fearing, therefore, that this would be the case, it resolved to prepare to give chase. With this object in view, the *Audiencia* gave orders to raise troops, found cannon, enroll all classes of arms and assemble at the port of Istapa a fleet comprising five ships. The *Licenciado* Valverde, President of the *Audiencia*, proceeded to that port, where also arrived Don Diego de Herrera, commandant of the forces of Guatemala, Don Diego de Guzmán, in command of the San Salvador forces, and Diego de Artieda, in his capacity of Admiral of the Armada; but when it was attempted to name a general to take command of all the forces, the *Audiencia* preferred Don Diego de Herrera. Artieda, disgusted by what he conceived to be

partiality, asked permission to return to Nicaragua, which was granted. Don Diego de Guzmán was appointed Admiral in his place and Drake proceeded quietly on his course to California.

Artieda afterwards undertook to carry forward the reestablishment of the city he had founded on the Guaymí, but, in the succeeding years of his government, lacked time because of the necessity for defending himself from the persecutions of the *Audiencia*, which appears to have originated in an impeachment proceeding instituted by Artieda against his predecessor, Anguciana de Gamboa, a nephew of the deceased *Licenciado* Cerrato, and which was a proceeding that resulted most disastrously for Artieda. For after his acquittal in the first action against him, Artieda was again accused and condemned to two years' suspension from office, with a fine of two thousand *pesos*. And, as though that were not enough, the judges of the *Audiencia* never tired of their efforts to discredit him in their letters to the King.

On the other hand, the *Cabildo* of Cartago and the Franciscans—among them Fray Lorenzo de Bienvenida—expressed themselves favorably towards Artieda, depicting him as a good and pious man. The same *Licenciado* Valverde, in his letter to the King on the 8th of

September, 1579,¹⁶ says that he is a "leading man and a valiant;" but it appears that the *esprit de corps* was stronger than justice in the mind of the *Audiencia*. It did not rest until poor Artieda was downed. At the same time that he was suspended from his employment, he was accused of failure to fulfill his *capitulación* and, not content with this, the *Audiencia*, in 1590, appointed the Licenciado Velázquez Ramiro Visiting Judge of Costa Rica, Governor *ad interim* and judge of the impeachment proceedings against Artieda, with the special duty of seeking a port in the province better suited than Nombre de Dios for discharging the fleets coming out from Spain.

For this purpose Velázquez Ramiro, in 1591, despatched Captain Juan Cabral to make the necessary exploration. Cabral set out from Cartago with Captain Pedro Flórez and some soldiers, and explored the coast, especially Almirante Bay, as far as the Guaymí River, where the city of Artieda had been located. They followed up the river to its upper waters, and, crossing the Cordillera, came out into the Chiriquí Valley on the Pacific side. During this journey they underwent great hardships and suffered much from hunger.¹⁷

¹⁶ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. VII, p. 296.

¹⁷ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 167.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CITY OF SANTIAGO DE TALAMANCA—ITS PROSPERITY—THE ADELANTADO DON GONZALO VÁZQUEZ DE CORONADO—RUIN OF THE CITY OF SANTIAGO DE TALAMANCA—FAILURE OF THE RECONQUEST

1591-1613

OVERWHELMED by lawsuits and bowed down by grief, Diego de Artieda died in Guatemala in 1591, and was even pursued beyond the grave by the *Audiencia*, by means of an attachment of his property. While the King was considering the appointment of his successor, the province was governed by Bartolomé de Lences, Gonzalo de Palma and Captain Antonio Alvarez Pereyra, one of the old *conquistadores*, all named *ad interim* by the *Audiencia* of Guatemala. On receipt of the news of Artieda's death, the King conferred the Government of Costa Rica on Don Fernando de la Cueva for twelve years on the same terms as those under which it had been held by Artieda, and, on the 29th of the same month, delivered a *capitulación* to Cueva wherein the latter undertook, within four years, to conclude the conquest of the territory of the province and to found in it a new city.

This Governor did not arrive in Costa Rica until March, 1595. Neither he nor his predecessors *ad interim* ever attempted anything in the territory that Artieda had sought to colonize. Don Fernando de la Cueva died at Cartago in 1599 and was succeeded provisionally by the *Adelantado* Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado, son of the famous conqueror of Costa Rica, who governed the province until the arrival of the proprietary governor in May, 1604.

This last bore the name of Don Juan de Ocón y Trillo. He was a man of energy who had served against the Moors in the Alpujarras Mountains and in the galleys of Spain. With his arrival the hope which the colonists of Costa Rica had always cherished of settling on the Atlantic territories and of possessing themselves of their riches was revived, for the new governor unsheathed his sword at the very first opportunity. It happened that the Moyaguas, Viceitas and other Indians in the Valley of the Duy had attacked the Tariacas, who had declared their allegiance to Spanish dominion, and that many of the latter had been killed or made prisoners. The Tariacas having thereupon repaired to Don Juan de Ocón y Trillo for assistance, he raised a body of troops to punish the outrage, naming as the leader of the expedition Captain Don Diego de Sojo y Peñaranda, a citizen of Car-

tago and nephew of Artieda, with whom he had come from Spain at the age of nine years.

Sojo penetrated into the country of the rebellious Indians, vanquished them, punished the guilty leaders of the aggression against the Tariacas and established himself in the village of Ateo, whence he despatched Captain Pedro Flórez to the heights of Viceita, where he captured the principal *cacique*, Quirigramá, who was most warlike. After this he immediately set about the conquest of the Valley of the Duy¹ and reduced it also to subjection. Dafirima, *cacique* of Usabarú, then proposed to Sojo that the Spaniards remain in that country to prevent a reopening of the war between the different tribes, which would otherwise be resumed after their departure. Readily acquiescing in the plan, Sojo laid it before his men, explaining to them the advantages offered by the establishment of a settlement in that beautiful valley, where there were many Indians and an abundant food supply, also good timber for the building of ships.

Some of the Spaniards approved the idea; others replied that before reaching a decision they must know whether there was a near-by port site

¹ Between the Sixaola and Changuinola rivers, and near the sea, flows a small river that still preserves the name of Duruy, or Dulz. This river empties into the Sand-Sand Lagoon.



TALAMANCA MOTHERS.

through which they would be able to establish commercial relations with the kingdom of Tierra Firme. To remove all doubts on this point, Sojo ordered Captain Pedro Flórez, who had been associated with Juan Cabral, to explore the Tarire River down to the sea. This exploration produced good results and thereby removed the objection urged against the project. Thereupon on the 10th of October, 1605,² he founded, on the right bank of the Tarire River,³ the city of Santiago de Talamanca, which he thus named in commemoration of his birthplace in Castile.⁴ After laying out the plans of the city, Sojo distributed building sites among the inhabitants to be, and the Ateos, Viceitas, Quequexques, Térrebes, Usabarús, Munaguas, Xicaguas, Sucagues and Cabécaras Indians, all of whom had been subjected to the power of Spain, were apportioned among them.

He appointed a *Cabildo* composed of Captain Pedro Flórez, Sergeant Martín de Beleño, Nicolás de Rodas, Simón Sánchez, Juan de Araya, with Diego de Sosa as scrivener, and set apart public land for the city, fixing as the

² León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 116.

³ There is a well founded supposition that the site on which the city of Santiago de Talamanca was located is that now called Suretka, or Tsuritkub. (See H. Pittier—*Nombres geográficos de Costa Rica*, I. Talamanca, p. 37.)

⁴ The village of Talamanca in the Province and diocese of Madrid.

boundaries of its jurisdiction "latitudinally, all the territory from the summit of the Cordillera to the North Sea" (Atlantic Ocean), "and longitudinally from the Tarire River and the ford that is crossed going from the said city to the Province of Tariaca, all the land extending to the east, throughout the length of that province, to the Escudo de Veragua, which is the boundary that divides this Government from that of Veragua." ⁵ As will be seen, this delimitation conforms in its entirety with that established by Philip II. for the Province of Costa Rica when that monarch conferred upon Diego de Artieda the office of governor thereof.

After the founding of the city, the Térrebes and Quequexques Indians rose in insurrection and killed four Spaniards who were found in their territory. Among them were the Alderman Martín de Beleño, and Perafán de Ribera, son of the former governor of that name. Sojo asked Don Juan de Ocón y Trillo for assistance in suppressing the rebellion and the latter sent reinforcements from Cartago which, in company with the forces of Sojo and a goodly number of Indian auxiliaries, marched against the insurrectionists. After a fierce encounter in which the *caciques* of Aoyaque and Ateo, allies of the

⁵ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 126.

Spaniards, lost their lives and several soldiers were wounded, Sojo succeeded in suppressing the revolt. With the execution of the leaders peace was reëstablished.

The successful outcome of Sojo's campaign gave birth to the hope that the final submission of the warlike Indians of the Atlantic coasts was at last an accomplished fact, and a notable impetus was given thereby to the new city of Santiago de Talamanca. Undertaking with much zeal the conversion of the Indians, Fray Juan de Ortega, a Franciscan who had accompanied the expedition, established churches in the villages of Usabarú, Ateo and Moyagua. In the city another church and a Franciscan convent were built. The Spanish inhabitants, with the aid of the Indians, planted fields of maize, cacao and fruits, and started cattle ranches. A very profitable trade was soon established with the Kingdom of Tierra Firme, whence ships bearing money, clothing, wine and other articles arrived at Talamanca, and took back in exchange maize, sarsaparilla, swine, *pita*,⁶ *cabuya*⁷ and other products of the soil. All the native tribes of the region, as far as the Tilorio or Changuinola River, rendered service to the *conquistadores*, but those occupying the

⁶ *Bromelia pinguin*.

⁷ *Furoraea* and *agave*.

shores of Almirante Bay, as far as the Escudo de Veragua, were still unsubdued.

Sojo remained in charge of the government of the city sixteen months. At the end of that time he returned to Cartago to ask the Governor for munitions of war and reinforcements with which to prevent an uprising of the Indians, who had begun to get restless. Don Juan de Ocón y Trillo raised a force for this purpose, but, in place of Sojo, named as lieutenant at Talamanca, on the 18th of June, 1607, his own son, Captain Don Pedro de Ocón y Trillo, who appeared before the *Cabildo* of the city of Santiago on the 31st of August of the same year and assumed possession of his charge. The new lieutenant showed much activity. He built houses, and a shipyard in which were afterwards constructed several frigates for the trade with Tierra Firme. He had, however, remained at his post but four months, when he was replaced by Captain Alonso de Bonilla, one of the first of the *conquistadores*, who had come to Costa Rica in early youth.

Captain Bonilla left Cartago in December, 1607, with soldiers and munitions of war. On his arrival at the city of Talamanca, he learned that Captain Cristóbal de Aguilar Alfaro, lieutenant of the Governor of Veragua, had just made his appearance in that city, having ar-

rived in a frigate with the apparent intention of entering the Estrella River (Tilorio, or Changuinola), discovered in 1564 by Vázquez de Coronado. When Bonilla wrote this news to Governor Ocón y Trillo, the latter hastened to take the necessary measures to repel any trespass by his neighbors on the territory to the north of the Escudo de Veragua, which was the frontier between the two provinces;⁸ but the Governor of Veragua did not insist upon his unfounded pretensions, thereby avoiding a conflict that might have had grave consequences. For the defense of the city Alonso de Bonilla immediately constructed a substantial wooden fortress, which a few years later was to render most important service.

Day by day, because of the fertility of the soil and the remunerative trade with the Kingdom of Tierra Firme, the prosperity of the new colony of Talamanca increased; yet this very prosperity only made more potent the desire possessed by all to reduce to submission the tribes about Almirante Bay that were still independent and in whose territories it was believed would be found the famous gold mines of which for so many years the Spaniards had dreamed. Only this great undertaking required

⁸ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 149.

a considerable outlay and Governor Ocón y Trillo was a poor man.

The *Adelantado* Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado, however, believed that he could carry through the work begun with such assurance by his father more than forty years before and besought the *Audiencia* of Guatemala in 1607 to entrust to him the conquest of the Indians of Almirante Bay, a project that now appeared more feasible, if he should take for the base of operations the new city of Santiago de Talamanca. It was easy for him to secure the wherewithal for his enterprise, not alone because of his office of *Adelantado*, which imposed on him the obligation of defending and extending the frontiers of the province, but also because of the intimate friendship he enjoyed with the President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, Dr. Alonso Criado de Castilla, who had already favored him on many occasions.

Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado was well liked in the Province of Costa Rica, of which he had been Governor *ad interim*. During his government he had constructed a road from Cartago to the Chiriquí valleys in order to facilitate the traffic by muleback which the Provinces of Costa Rica and Nicaragua carried on with that of Panama, and this work of great public utility was a good point in his favor. But if Don Gon-

zalo inherited from his father an admirable generosity towards his soldiers, this was not the case as to the other good qualities of the *conquistador*. He was indolent and had a greater fondness for the attractions of card playing and pretty women than for the rude work of conquest; and as he was, moreover, advanced in years and in poor health, he doubtless lacked also the spirit which had induced him to enlist voluntarily in the Armada that was assembled at Guatemala to repulse Drake in 1579.

In the year 1601 Dr. Alonso Criado de Castilla, with a view to opening the road to Chiriquí, had authorized Don Gonzalo to reduce to subjection all the Indian tribes in the Province of Costa Rica as far as Veragua. In 1608, basing his action on this precedent, he renewed the authorization with special reference to the conquest of those that occupied the borders of Almirante Bay. Governor Ocón y Trillo, holding himself to be injured by this measure, placed obstacles in the way of the *Adelantado*, which, taken in connection with the lack of energy and the inactivity of the latter, brought about the collapse of the enterprise and produced discord between them and the friends of both—a discord that became more acute because of the serious events occurring at that time in Cartago.

Don Pedro de Villareal, Bishop of Nicaragua

and Costa Rica, came to visit the diocese in 1608. This was the first time that a Bishop had set foot in the Province of Costa Rica and it was natural to suppose that his presence would have been most efficacious in pacifying discordant elements; but Don Pedro de Villareal was a prelate of exceptionally bad character and did nothing but fan the flame. Under the pretext that the Governor occupied in the church a status above that warranted by his rank, he provoked a series of incidents that caused great scandal, and, in spite of the fact that the *Audiencia* of Guatemala held the Governor to be in the right, he insisted that the latter should remove his seat from where it was located. Ocón y Trillo, who on his part was a man of very little patience and possessed of a lofty idea of his position and nobility, for he was descended from knights of the *Banda Dorada*,⁹ forcefully rejected the pretensions of the Bishop, and not only treated the priest who came to present them as a rogue and a rascal, literally pushing him out of his presence, but informed him that he would continue to occupy his seat, and, if necessary, even install it on the high altar. As might have been expected, the enemies of the Governor, who were by no means few in number, ranged themselves

⁹ A knighthood founded by King Alfonso XI. of Castile.



DON PEDRO DE VILLAREAL, BISHOP OF NICARAGUA.
From a painting in the Episcopal Palace at San José de Costa Rica.

on the side of the Bishop, and Cartago was converted into a hotbed of quarrels.

On the 20th of December, 1608, the situation had become so strained between the Governor and the Bishop that as the latter was leaving the church of San Francisco, accompanied by a great suite of priests, friars and laymen, after a service and pontifical investiture, Don Juan de Ocón y Trillo, accompanied by his son, Don Sebastián Chacón de Luna, Captain Juan de Mestanza, a sheriff, and several other persons, all with drawn swords, fell upon the Bishop's followers, arresting his Major-domo, Don Gaspar de Quevedo, and lodging a complaint against him; whereupon the Bishop sought to have the proceeding quashed by the royal court. The *Audiencia*, on receipt of the petition presented for this purpose by the Bishop, despatched Judge (*Oidor*) Martín Lobo de Guzmán to Costa Rica to take cognizance of the case. The Governor and his companions were sent to prison and their property attached, but afterwards the late term absolved them all and restored their confiscated salaries to all who were public functionaries. This judgment, and others like it, demonstrate the jealousy with which the monarchs of Spain, in spite of their ardent Catholicism, defended the supremacy of the royal authority against the encroachments of the

clergy. So much was this so that one of the points always investigated in impeachment proceedings against the authorities was whether they had permitted the intervention of ecclesiastical judges in matters within the jurisdiction of the Crown.

According to a letter from Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado to Dr. Don Alonso Criado de Castilla,¹⁰ Governor Ocón y Trillo was so silly that he hardly knew his right hand from his left, but, discarding all exaggeration, it is evident that he possessed more force of character than cleverness. His deficiency in the latter quality, however, was supplied by the astuteness of his secretary, Jerónimo Felipe, who skillfully steered him through his wrangles with the Bishop and in such manner as to obstruct the conquest of the *Adelantado*. The few soldiers the *Adelantado* had inveigled into his service were intimidated by threats and the officers were disheartened by assurances that Ocón y Trillo himself had solicited the conquest directly from the King, and that he momentarily expected the arrival of the royal decree conferring upon him the right to undertake it. By this means he managed to persuade a number of persons, among others Captain Juan de Mestanza, who had arrived

¹⁰ Archivos Nacionales de Costa Rica. Sección Histórica. Guatemala, Leg. III. Exp. 024.

with Don Gonzalo from Guatemala, and it is probable that he was the very character Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra makes the object of his satire in chapter VII. of his *Viaje del Parnaso*¹¹ ("Journey to Parnassus"), published in 1614.

As the *Adelantado* could do nothing with the Governor, he repaired to his good friend Dr. Alonso Criado de Castilla for extrication from his difficulties and the latter complied. Undoubtedly arbitrary and unjust as was such a measure, since it had no other object than to favor a friend to the prejudice of a man who had succeeded in founding there a substantial and prosperous city where so many others had failed, Castilla issued a royal order appointing the *Adelantado* Governor and Captain-General of the valley of the Duy and placing in his jurisdiction the city of Santiago de Talamanca. Don Gonzalo, after remaining inactive for several months at Santiago de Talamanca, had returned to Cartago leaving the organization of his enterprise in charge of the Master of Camp, Don Diego de Sojo, who had converted himself into an adversary of Ocón y Trillo, from the moment

¹¹ Llegó Juan de Mestanza, cifra y suma
De tanta erudición, donaire y gala,
Que no hay muerte ni edad que la consuma.
Apolo le arrancó de Guatemala
Y le trujo en su ayuda para ofensa
De la canalla en todo extremo mala.

the latter took from him the government of the city. For lack of soldiers, Sojo could at first do nothing, but the *Adelantado* informed him of the momentarily expected receipt of his appointment as Governor of the Duy, and, profiting by the fact that at the time there was no lieutenant to the Governor of Costa Rica, he negotiated with the members of the *Cabildo* of the city of Talamanca, all of whom were his friends, with the result that they consented to place some men at his disposal under the pretext that this would serve to bring in from their hiding places in the forests the Indians of the subjected tribes who were not rendering service to their masters.

So Sojo set forth with twenty-eight soldiers and proceeded to the villages of Moyagua and Xicagua, which had been pacified. There he caused to be brought into his presence the Indians who had withdrawn to the woods and ordered that some should have their ears cut off and others their hair, the latter punishment being the greatest possible affront he could have offered to his victims. Among the mutilated Indians were two *caciques* of Moyagua. After this he at once removed to Cabécar, where he was well received. At this place he learned of the existence of a temple where there was a number of golden idols, and, doubtless, as an appreciation of the hospitality received, despatched in secret a



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mulatto slave of his, accompanied by three Indian servants, to steal the treasure. In this he was successful.

The Indians, being already justly indignant against Sojo, could not endure this last outrage. The Ateos, Viceitas, Térrebes and Cabécaras responded to the call of Guaycorá, *cacique* of Sucaca, and of Samamará, *usékar* or high priest of Cabécar,¹² and fell upon the camp of the Spaniards by surprise at dawn of the 29th of July, 1610, killing two and wounding eight, among the latter being the Alcalde Juan Fernández, who lost both his hands and received seven wounds in the head, and the Padre Juan de Ortega. Sojo, with much difficulty, succeeded in driving off the Indians and fortified himself as best he could. After several days, given over to the care of the wounded, he was relieved by two *caciques* from Xicagua and Moyagua at the head of a number of their subjects, and then pushed on to Doyabe, a place situated four leagues from Talamanca city. As it was necessary during the march to repel numerous attacks of the insurrectionary Indians, the munitions of war became exhausted. At

¹² The *usékar* or high priest of the Talamanca Indians always resides among the Cabécaras, the tribe that enjoys supremacy in religion. William M. Gabb—*Tribus y Lenguas Indígenas de Talamanca*, in León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. III, p. 323.

Doyabe Sojo received the news that the city was besieged by the rebels and, acting on the decision of a council of war, retired to Tariaca in Tierra Adentro.

The situation of the city could not have been more precarious. After the attack on Sojo, the confederated Indians marched on Santiago de Talamanca, killing on their way all the Spanish men, women and children who were found in the fields, and laid siege to the city and set it on fire. The inhabitants, to the number of 120 persons of all ages, took refuge in the fort of San Ildefonso, built a few years before by Alonso de Bonilla, and by this means alone were enabled to save their lives. The Indians then tried to fire the fort by shooting flaming arrows into the roof, though in this they did not succeed.

In view of the gravity of the situation, the *Cabildo* resolved to ask help from the city of Cartago. A messenger, evading the besiegers, succeeded in making his way out, and arrived at his destination seven days later. The letter from the *Cabildo* was received at Cartago on the 8th of August, 1610. Instantly the church bells rang out a summons to the inhabitants to meet in open municipal assembly (*cabildo abierto*). The meeting was attended by the Governor and other authorities, the ecclesiastics and several of

the old *conquistadores*, among them the aged captain, Juan Solano, companion in arms of Cavallón, of Juan Vázquez de Coronado and Perafán de Ribera, who enjoyed the affection and esteem of the entire province. As the assembly resolved that full powers be given the Governor in order that he might despatch the help asked for, Ocón y Trillo, without the loss of a moment, got together a small force, and, setting out the following day, went as far as Turrialba, from which point he returned to Cartago for reinforcements. The expedition then proceeded towards Talamanca under the command of Captain Diego del Cubillo, who was appointed Lieutenant to the Governor, and of the Master of Camp, Don Sebastián Chacón de Luna, and arrived at Santiago de Talamanca on the 21st of August. The Indians, when they heard of the approach of the troops, raised the siege and Don Diego de Sojo was enabled to return from Tariaca and take refuge in the city.

Scarcely were they freed from the menace of the insurgent Indians when the citizens of Talamanca found themselves involved in a further conflict. Shortly after the departure of the relieving force, Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado received his appointment from Guatemala and forthwith sent to Sojo his commission as Lieutenant to the Governor, in order by this

means to forestall a similar appointment by Ocón y Trillo. The messenger overtook the soldiers at Chirripó; but their captain, Diego de Cubillo, informed of what had taken place, relieved him of his despatches. The *Cabildo* of Santiago, which was inimical to Ocón y Trillo, and had notice that the royal commission from the President of the *Audiencia* was already in the hands of the *Adelantado*, refused to receive Captain Cubillo as the Lieutenant of the Governor of Cartago, and, on the 11th of September, granted recognition to Don Diego de Sojo in spite of the fact that Governor Ocón y Trillo had appealed in the matter to the King before the President of the *Audiencia*, a proceeding which under the law had the effect of suspending the appointment of the *Adelantado*. Thereupon Cubillo brought action against the members of the *Cabildo* and placed them under arrest, but a few days later returned to Cartago with his command and left the city under the control of Sojo.

Again thrown upon their own resources, the inhabitants of Talamanca awaited in vain the help so urgently besought from their new Governor, Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado—for he was unable to send them any—and so, fearful of another Indian uprising, they abandoned the country and returned to Cartago. Thus disappeared the city of Santiago de Talamanca,

which had had an existence of five years and had promised to become the most prosperous settlement in the Province of Costa Rica. The responsibility of the lamentable failure rests in the first instance upon the President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, who, through friendly complaisance, had placed it under the authority of a man notoriously incapable. The abominable conduct of Sojo and the dissensions among the Spaniards completed the disaster, which, among many other evil consequences, entailed an enormous loss in territory to Costa Rica.

The ruin of the city of Talamanca was bruited abroad throughout the entire kingdom of Guatemala. The *Audiencia*, considering the gravity of the matter, resolved that one of the judges should make a visit to the Province of Costa Rica. To this end it detailed Don Pedro Sánchez Araque, who arrived at Cartago on the 30th of April, 1611, and proceeded at once to Tierra Adentro, the region contiguous to Talamanca, to investigate the situation and see what could be done. Sánchez Araque reached the conclusion that the rebellious province must be immediately reconquered, and, on his return to Cartago, organized for this purpose an expedition of seventy men, which he placed under the orders of the Master of Camp, Don Diego de Sojo, and of Captains Miguel de Villalobos and

Gálvez Caballero, and of the judicial commissioner, Santiago de León. On the arrival of the expeditionaries at the hamlet of Tariaca, which for many years had been reduced to submission, they found it depopulated and learned that these Indians also had joined the rebels. For this reason they did not dare to go forward and sent back to Cartago for reinforcements. Governor Ocón y Trillo then set out in person for Tariaca on the 27th of July, 1611, at the head of a force of thirty men. Unfortunately, that happened which could easily have been foreseen. Disputes having arisen between the Governor and Don Diego de Sojo, the opening of the war was delayed, the provisions were exhausted and the files were reduced by desertion. Ocón y Trillo, who had only come out to bring the reinforcements, returned to Cartago, and Sojo, though in his capacity as leader of the expedition of reconquest under obligation to remain, did likewise some time later. Meanwhile, Don Pedro Sánchez Araque had removed to Nicaragua and there at the end of November, 1611, received news of Sojo's retirement. He instantly sent pressing orders to the leading cities of Nicaragua to enlist soldiers and get together munitions of war for the service of the King and the relief of the Province of Costa Rica.

The people of Nicaragua responded to the

call with great good will. Some presented themselves in the capacity of volunteers and many contributed money, arms, munitions of war, provisions and other necessities. In contrast with this, Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado, in whose charge the conquest of Talamanca had been placed, when summoned by Sánchez Araque to aid in the enterprise, excused himself therefrom on the pretext of his infirmities and poverty. The *Audiencia* thereupon, on the 18th of March, 1612, named Pedro de Oliver, *Alcalde mayor* of Verapaz, as leader of the new expedition. This officer proceeded to Nicaragua, and thence set out by land for Costa Rica at the head of a few men. In the month of June a frigate also set sail from Granada, bound for Talamanca, with forty soldiers under the command of Don Sebastián Chacón de Luna. Chacón de Luna disembarked at the mouth of the Tarire, and, leaving several of his men there on board the frigate, set out with the balance and proceeded to the place where the city of Santiago had been; this he found deserted. On his part, Pedro de Oliver left Cartago with two companies of infantry and joined Chacón de Luna at the point where the latter had established his quarters.

He at once took up the task of bringing up the provisions and war supplies that had been left

on the frigate—an undertaking attended with extreme difficulties. The Spanish soldiers and the Indian auxiliaries fell sick, many of them dying, and, in spite of the reinforcements received from Tierra Adentro and Cartago, it became impossible to begin the campaign. In despair Oliver and Chacón de Luna decided to proceed to Cartago with the greater part of the infantry. On their way they had several encounters with the Indians and in one of them Chacón de Luna was seriously wounded in the throat. A small garrison was left behind at Talamanca under the command of Captain Juan Solano, son of the *conquistador* of that name, but this garrison, weakened day by day by lack of provisions, sickness and desertion, lost no time in abandoning its post, retiring to Tierra Adentro, and the projected reconquest of Talamanca failed. Dr. Sánchez Araque then ordered the Governor of Costa Rica to establish a permanent garrison in Tierra Adentro to guard this region against the attacks of the rebels. In 1613 Tariaica was garrisoned.

CHAPTER XVII

REBELLIONS OF THE INDIANS OF TIERRA ADENTRO—
PROJECTS FOR THE RECONQUEST OF TALAMANCA—
THE GALLANT DON RODRIGO ARIAS MALDONADO—
THE MARQUISATE OF TALAMANCA

1615-1664

THE triumph of the Indians of Talamanca, who had succeeded in regaining their liberty, was repeated in the contiguous country of Tierra Adentro, which extended from the hamlet of Teotique, famous as the theater of Diego Gutiérrez' defeat and death in 1544, to the left bank of the Tarire River. Thus it was that in 1615 the Indians of Tariaca in their turn revolted, that place being garrisoned at that time by some soldiers attached to Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado, who was still dreaming of the reconquest of his lost Talamanca government, and it became necessary to despatch an armed force against the rebels under the command of Captain Juan de las Alas, who subdued them and brought back as a prisoner the *cacique* Don Antonio Carebe. A number of Indians were condemned to death and others severely punished.

In the following year a new rebellion broke out in Tierra Adentro, headed by Bartolo Xora, and Captain Juan de las Alas was entrusted with its suppression. Informed that Xora had approached as near as San Mateo de Chirripó, he detailed Lieutenant Juan de Acuña, with but four men, to arrest him. Xora fled to Payegua, fortified himself there with his people, and summoned his Talamanca allies, whereupon Acuña found it necessary to double back on Teotique. Here Juan de las Alas came to join him and Acuña set out again for Chirripó with twelve soldiers, arriving at the moment at which the Indians were preparing to burn that village, and its church, which was served by a Franciscan friar. Xora then retired to the other side of the Matina River and thence proceeded a second time to Payegua, where the Spaniards afterwards defeated him and took him prisoner. The Governor condemned him to death in company with other Indian chiefs.

The Spaniards had barely laid down their arms when it became necessary to take the field again to contend with a third uprising in Tierra Adentro. The Aoyaques, Cureros and Hebenas Indians, inhabiting the banks of the Tarire, arose in insurrection in the same year, 1616. They burned the church at Aoyaque and killed its curate, the Franciscan Friar Rodrigo Pérez.

This done, they disinterred the bodies of three *caciques* that had been buried in the cemetery of the church and, following their own custom, conducted funeral ceremonies over them, accompanied by sacrifice of Indian slaves. They then immediately proceeded to Guisirí and Hamea, burned them, profaned the churches and sacred objects, killed a number of Christianized Indians and carried off as prisoners twenty women and ten children. The Governor, Don Juan de Mendoza y Medrano, went forth in person against them with sixty soldiers and a force of Indian auxiliaries on a punitive expedition. He had several engagements with the rebels and finally conquered them, taking prisoners the *cacique* Don Coreneo and eighty of his subjects. On his return to Cartago, he transferred the garrison of Tariaca to San Mateo de Chirripó, where it remained until 1709. On the three expeditions of which an account has been given, so many cruelties were inflicted upon the Indians that when knowledge of them reached the *Audiencia*, that tribunal ordered that proceedings be instituted against Governor Mendoza y Medrano and that he be brought under arrest to Guatemala.

The continued uprisings in Tierra Adentro, which forced the Spaniards to live with arms in their hands, kept alive the desire to reconquer

the Indians of the Talamanca country, by whose influence they were undoubtedly swayed. In 1617 Captain Diego del Cubillo, of whom mention has already been made in this history, repaired to the court at Madrid to ask that this conquest be confided to him; ¹ but the Council of the Indies decided against his petition on the authority of the King's order that such undertakings should only be carried out by the missionaries and through the medium of evangelical preaching. However, that which the King of Spain ordered was not always what was performed in America. Thus it was that the Governor Don Alonso del Castillo y Guzmán, who succeeded Mendoza y Medrano, being of opinion that the latter had not gone far enough, resolved again to chastise the Aoyaques, Cureros and Hebenas Indians. He offered the citizens of Cartago, in return for their aid in his undertaking, to bring these Indians into the city to act as their servants and rebuild their houses and the public buildings, which were in a very dilapidated condition as a result, probably, of earthquakes. The proposition was accepted with rejoicing and the Governor set about the work. He sent reinforcements for the garrison at Chirripó and himself set out in September of 1619 to visit that place. Here he was visited by some

¹ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, pp. 216, 218.

emissaries of the Aoyaques, Cureros and Hebenas bearing messages of peace; but the Governor wanted war, and, on the 10th of October, took up his march towards Talamanca. At the village of Guisirí, he was overtaken by his brother, Captain Don Juan de Guzmán, at the head of another small body of soldiers, and there the expeditionary force was reviewed. It was found to number forty-six men, among whom figured several veterans of the Talamanca wars, such as Don Diego de Sojo, Diego del Cubillo and Juan Solano the younger.

After remaining two days at Guisirí, the Governor resumed his march with the Spanish infantry and Indian auxiliaries, and proceeded as far as the Tarire River, on the banks of which he pitched his camp, to which he gave the name,—“*Nuestra Señora de Buen Suceso.*” Many of the men and women of the Aoyaques came in peacefully, but few of the Cureros and Hebenas presented themselves. The Governor, on the pretext that the Indians, having come in bearing their spears, meant treachery, assembled a council of war which declared that, therefore, it would be necessary to take them by surprise. To this end the Spaniards constructed a large building, making the Indians believe that it was a church. Many of them actually repaired thither to hear the preaching of the evangelists, and, once in-

side, were surrounded by soldiers and made prisoners. This ruse accomplished, a force was sent out to scour the country and bring in more prisoners.

After having bestowed solemn funeral honors on Fray Rodrigo Pérez, and placing a wooden cross on the site on the bank of the Tarire where he was killed by the Aoyaques, the Governor struck camp at midnight of the 30th of October and took with him four hundred Indian prisoners of both sexes and all ages, whom he parceled out among the inhabitants of Cartago. Then followed at that city a lengthy proceeding against those who had been implicated in the rebellion of 1616. Twelve died on the gallows in Cartago on the 8th of January, 1620, under sentence of the Governor. Among them were the *caciques* Juan Serrabá, Francisco Cagxi, Diego Hebená and the valiant chief Juan Ibaczará. Many others underwent torture and other cruel punishments. All this was done in spite of the royal decree of June 9, 1618, wherein the King ordered the Governor of Costa Rica to treat the Indians with kindness; but Don Alonso del Castillo y Guzmán had little respect for the great of this world and no hesitation in speaking ill of his King or in saying that he himself would like to hang two monks and a Pope. And although his treachery and the cruelties he inflicted upon

the Indians remained unpunished, his intemperate language against the Crown and the clergy merited some years in prison.

The insurrections in Tierra Adentro came to an end with these severe punishments in 1619, but it was not until 1638 that the reconquest of Talamanca was again projected. The Governor of Costa Rica, who was at that time Don Gregorio de Sandoval, in that year proposed to the King that he should take charge of the enterprise and reduce to submission the tribes that occupied the territory of that province from the Tarire River as far as the Province of Veragua, and agreed to found a city in the Valley of the Duy and another in the Guaymí Valley. His proposal did not bear fruit. Sandoval, in 1640, established the village of San Salvador near Chirripó in Tierra Adentro, with the Ayoaque Indians, and also constructed a church served by a Franciscan friar. Another proposal for the conquest of Talamanca was submitted in 1648 by Don Francisco Núñez de Temiño, son-in-law of Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado; and Governor Don Juan Fernández de Salinas, after having visited Tierra Adentro and assembled various tribes, which he established on the banks of the Tarire, appointing the authorities from their own numbers, also asked, in 1651, that the reconquest be confided to him. This same Gov-

ernor, in association with Núñez de Temiño, addressed a further petition to the Crown with the same object in view, in 1658, but nothing resulted therefrom.

Six years later, in 1659, Governor Don Andrés Arias Maldonado, successor of Fernández de Salinas, penetrated into the Tierra Adentro for the purpose of searching along the Atlantic coast for a suitable port for the commerce which the Province of Costa Rica had built up with Portobelo and Chagres, for the conditions at the port of Suerre were very bad. At the port, to-day called Limón, which was inhabited by a tribe of the Tariacas, or Cariacas, descendants of those same Indians who were discovered by Columbus in 1502, he chanced upon some Talamancas who had come there to kill turtles, and from them he had accounts concerning their country. This circumstance awakened in the mind of the Don Rodrigo, son of the Governor, a consuming desire to accomplish the reconquest of the awesome Province of Talamanca.

Don Rodrigo Arias Maldonado y Velasco was a young and gallant gentleman, a native of the city of Marbella in Andalusia, and related to several of the most noble and illustrious families of Spain, such as that of the Dukes of Alba and that of the Counts, Dukes of Benavente. At that time he was twenty-one years of age and

just arrived in Costa Rica with his father the Governor. The President of the *Audiencia* appointed him Corregidor of Turrialba and Ujarraz, but he was called to a much more lofty destiny. This happened when least expected. The Governor having died in November, 1661, the entire province besought the *Audiencia* to appoint Don Rodrigo to succeed him *ad interim*. This was due as much to the merits of the father as to the brilliant qualities all recognized in the son. The *Audiencia* acquiesced in the request and the young Governor had barely taken possession of his charge when he turned his attention towards Talamanca, with several *caciques* of which he had already established amicable relations.

In the month of April, 1662, he set out from Cartago with only ten men and Fray Nicolás de Ledesma, Guardian of the Convent of San Mateo de Chirripó, and reached the Tarire River without mishap. Thanks to his winning manners and his kindly demeanor, he succeeded in attaching to himself seven tribes of Indians—the Ciruros, Duqueibas, Uruscaras, Moyaguas, Xicaguas and those in the Valley of the Duy. He caused them to settle on the banks of the Tarire at a place he named San Bartolomé de Duqueiba, to the number of twelve hundred souls, under the leadership of their principal *cacique*, Cabsi, and built them a church. The new colony was progressing most

satisfactorily when suddenly certain tribes that had refused to respond to the Governor's call, urged on by their priests, attacked the Spaniards in great force on the 14th of June, 1662. Don Rodrigo, with the ten men who had accompanied him thither and the friendly Indians, was forced to seek refuge in a fort that he had taken the precaution of erecting and from that vantage point wrote for help to his Lieutenant-Governor at Cartago, Don Fernando de Salazar. Two exceptionally courageous men, Captain Julián de Castroverde and the Lieutenant Roque Jacinto Hermoso, undertook to deliver the letter and arrived in Cartago on the 24th of June at eight o'clock in the evening.

The *Cabildo* instantly assembled the principal citizens to deliberate on the situation. Contrary to what might have been expected under the circumstances, there developed a diversity of opinion. Don Fernando de Salazar and the majority of the military element thought that help should be sent to the Governor without conditions, but the ecclesiastics said that assistance should be given Don Rodrigo only to enable him to return to Cartago and not for the purpose of continuing the conquest, because, they maintained, the Indians had declared that the friars alone should enter their country. There were not lacking also those who believed that succor should be re-

fused, since Don Rodrigo said in his letter that, although he could retreat with his own force, he scorned to do this, being the son of his father, and being fearful lest they think him afraid; and the Lieutenant Juan Vázquez de Coronado, the oldest *Alcalde* of the city of Cartago, called Salazar's attention to a royal order of the year 1600, in which the Governors of Costa Rica were prohibited from sending the inhabitants of the province against their will, to take part in new conquests.

Salazar replied that he was willing to obey the order; but notwithstanding this, he ought to despatch the assistance asked for, as that order of the King was not applicable to the present case, since Don Rodrigo had entered Talamanca at the invitation of the *caciques* and not for the purpose of conquest. In spite of the shameful protest of the *Ayuntamiento* and of others, the opinion of the best citizens prevailed, and, in the first days of July, twenty-five men set out for Talamanca under the orders of Sergeant-Major Alonso de Bonilla, the soldier enjoying the highest prestige in the province and a grandson of the *conquistador* of that name. He reached San Bartolomé de Duqueiba without opposition. As the instructions Bonilla bore with him were limited to the extrication of the Governor from the difficulty in which he found

himself, the latter was forced to set out on his return to Cartago. Before leaving, however, he summoned the principal *cacique* of Talamanca and did his best to convince him that he should submit to the domination of the King. The *cacique*, after taking several days for reflection, answered that at the moment this was impossible, but after a while he would bring about the submission of all his subjects and their conversion to the Catholic religion, and that, when the opportune moment arrived, he would advise the Governor that he might return.

Don Rodrigo was filled with deep resentment against those who favored abandoning him to his fate while menaced by such grave difficulties; but he was too noble and generous to make reprisals. Instead, he succeeded in interesting the citizens of Cartago in his project for the reconquest of Talamanca and the greater part of them laid before the *Audiencia* of Guatemala a petition asking that the Governor be directed to carry it through. Whilst the reply of the *Audiencia* was on its way, a new insurrection broke out among the Tariacas and Don Rodrigo took the field to suppress it. Casting aside the usual violent methods, he applied himself to quieting the Indians by kindly treatment and cajolery. He made them presents of agricultural implements and of knickknacks, and of clothes for their wo-

men. This produced excellent results. The Indians were pacified and the Governor distributed them among the various villages under their respective chiefs. The Tariacas remained wholly satisfied and promised to use their influence with their neighbors, the Talamancas, to the end that they also should submit, and, in fact, shortly afterwards several *caciques* arrived at Cartago on a visit to Don Rodrigo. He received them hospitably in his own house and entertained them to the best of his ability. In return the *caciques* assured him that he would be well received when he came into their country.

The *Audiencia* of Guatemala granted the authority for the reconquest of Talamanca,² and, all legal obstacles being thus removed, the Governor, with much energy and intelligence, devoted himself to the necessary preparations for this great enterprise. From the port of Suerre he despatched a cargo of flour in a frigate bound for Puertobelo, whence it was to return with arms, munitions of war, clothing, medicines, wine, oil, etc. The frigate arrived in due course at Puertobelo and with equal good fortune returned to Suerre, bearing all the purchases that had been made at the former port. But, by reason of the bad weather prevailing on its arrival, only a part of the cargo could be unloaded; the launch

² León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 344.

that was taking off the goods foundered and two men were drowned, thus making it necessary for the frigate to proceed to Portete, a little cove between Moín and Limón, there to complete its unloading. By great misfortune it was ambushed at Portete and seized by buccaneers.

The spirited Don Rodrigo was not dismayed by this serious *contretemps*, which brought with it a loss of twelve thousand *pesos*, and his preparations for the reconquest continued with undiminished activity. The arms and munitions of war disembarked at Suerre, as well as a small quantity of wine, spirits and oil, were transported to Teotique by the Tierra Adentro Indians. All obtainable elements were assembled at Cartago and, after sending forward one hundred and fifty mules, laden with provisions, and one hundred oxen, Don Rodrigo Arias Maldonado set forth with two Franciscans, Fray Pedro de Oses and Fray Juan de San Antonio, one hundred and fifty Spaniards, thirty mulattoes and one hundred and twenty-five Christianized Indians, which constituted for Costa Rica at that period a great expedition. He reached San Bartolomé de Duqueiba, where he was well received by the Indians. At that place he established his general headquarters, and leaving there his impedimenta in the custody of twelve soldiers, pushed forward into the Talamanca country.

At a distance of five leagues from Duqueiba he founded another settlement, to which he gave the name of San Francisco de Conamarí, built a church and some houses and assembled there a large number of Indians, who had been attracted by his tact and gentleness. It is sufficient to record that during that entire journey not a shot was fired nor a sword unsheathed.

With the exception of the loss of the frigate, the young Governor's enterprise had made good progress. With dexterity had he been able to overcome the difficulties that attended its organization and those that nature opposed in the road, and so docile had the Indians shown themselves to be, that it was reasonable to hope that the hour had struck for the definitive submission of Talamanca. But we are constrained to believe that the higher power which governs the actions of men had otherwise ordained when we note that the edifice so laboriously set up, and apparently so substantial, fell quickly to earth, like a house of cards. One night, without the slightest warning of such an intention, the officers and soldiers of the Governor deserted. But four men and the Padre Juan de San Antonio remained faithful. The explanation of such an astonishing occurrence is not known, because all the documents relating to it have been destroyed, or it has been impossible to find them. In his grave predica-

ment Don Rodrigo received a well-merited recompense at the hands of the Indians for his kindly treatment. They, instead of profiting by the opportunity offered for revenge against the Spaniards for their ancient wrongs, and on no less a person than a Governor and Captain-General, not only wrought no injury to Don Rodrigo, but escorted him with every evidence of respect as far as San Bartolomé de Duqueiba, where the small garrison had been left with the baggage.

As soon as he could return to Cartago, the Governor reported these events to General Don Martín Carlos de Mencos, President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala. Whereupon, that officer appointed Don Juan de Obregón to open proceedings in the case, to the end that the guilty should be punished as they deserved. Among these figured a number of the most important men of the province, such as García de Alvarado, a descendant of the famous Don Jorge de Alvarado,³ brother of the conqueror of Guatemala, Captain Antonio Vázquez de Coronado, of illustrious ancestry, and, what, is more surprising, Sergeant-Major Alonso de Bonilla. It could safely have been said that, if the punishment for

³ Don Jorge de Alvarado married, in Mexico, Doña Luisa de Estrada, daughter of the Treasurer Alonso de Estrada, who in his turn was an illegitimate son of the King, Don Fernando the Catholic.

desertion were carried forward, there was not one of the principal families of the Province of Costa Rica that would not feel its effects. Of this Don Rodrigo was aware. Always generous, he lent his aid to suppress the proceeding, and the scandalous act remained unpunished and a mystery to posterity. However, there are reasons for the conjecture that the deserters acted in conformity with a plan devised by the officers of the Governor and certain citizens of Cartago who were hostile to him and had hatched a plot against him in his absence. These latter were headed by the *Alcalde* Tomás Calvo, who proposed to the *Cabildo* that Don Rodrigo be refused recognition on his return from Talamanca and that he be placed under arrest on the pretext that he was excommunicate. Because of the decided opposition of the *Alcaldes*, Don Fernando de Salazar and Don José de Alvarado, this iniquitous scheme was not carried out. Tomás Calvo was sent to prison.

When the punishment of the deserters was attempted, the President of the *Audiencia*, in order that the proceeding might be conducted with entire impartiality, had appointed Don Juan de Obregón Governor *ad interim* of Costa Rica, in 1664, and named Don Rodrigo Arias Maldonado *Alcalde mayor* of Nicoya. The latter remained but a short time in the exercise of his

new charge, it being much beneath his merit, but removed in 1666 to the city of Guatemala, where his noble birth, his youth, his personal gifts and the fame of his adventures opened wide the doors of the proud aristocracy of the capital of the kingdom. The sudden death of the beautiful and noble lady with whom he was desperately in love was the cause that induced him shortly afterwards to renounce the magnificence of this world. In December of the same year, 1666, he joined the companions of Pedro de Bethencourt, who had founded at Guatemala the Bethlehem House of Charity, devoted to the care of the convalescent poor after their discharge from the hospital. On the death of Bethencourt, in 1667, he raised his noble proselyte to the headship of the house, recommending to him that the brotherhood be converted into a monastic order. The courtly caballero, from that moment, applied all his talents, activity and perseverance to the fulfillment of his predecessor's wishes. Transformed into Fray Rodrigo de la Cruz, he gave extraordinary impetus to the institution, and, when the King, Don Carlos II., rewarded his services in Costa Rica with the title of Marquis of Talamanca, he preferred the tonsure to the trefoiled crown. After founding hospitals in Peru and Mexico, he went several times to Madrid and Rome to secure the ap-



DON RODRIGO ARIAS MALDONADO Y VELASCO AS FRAY RODRIGO DE LA CRUZ, GENERAL OF THE ORDER OF BETHLEHEM.

This handsome painting of the Spanish school of the 17th century emanates from the Convent of Beatas de Belén in Guatemala and is now the property of the author.

proval of the statutes of the new Order of Bethlehem. He met with the greatest difficulties, which were only overcome by his admirable tenacity and the powerful help given him by the Queen Mother, Doña María Ana de Austria, the Duchess of Abeyro, wife of the Duke of Arcos, in whose house he was entertained, and other powerful personages. At the end of many years of struggle, he saw his efforts crowned with success, and, by election of his brothers, became the first General of the Bethlehemite Order. He died in Mexico in 1716, at the age of seventy-six years.⁴

⁴Dr. Don Francisco Antonio de Montalvo—*Vida admirable del venerable hermano Pedro de S. Joseph Betancur*. Rome, MDCLXXXIII. Fray Josef García—*Historia Bethlemítica*. Seville, 1723. *Representación jurídica por el Hermano Rodrigo de la Cruz*. Madrid, MDCXCIII.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BUCCANEERS—EDWARD MANSFIELD AND HENRY MORGAN—THE TALAMANCA MISSIONS—THE MOSQUITOS ZAMBOS AND THE ENGLISH

1666-1705

DON Rodrigo Arias Maldonado's expedition was the last attempt made by the Spaniards to establish themselves in Talamanca by force of arms. Thenceforth the conquest of the territory was entrusted to the missionaries, who had already become firmly installed in Tierra Adentro, at the rebels' very gates. As for the Talamanca Indians, who until then had struggled alone against the Spaniards, in 1666 they received a proposal of alliance from one capable of proving a powerful supporter—Edward Mansveldt, or Mansfield, the most dreaded of the buccaneers that harried the coasts of the Caribbean Sea, and who, having two years earlier seized the island of Santa Catalina, which belonged to the Kingdom of Guatemala, had nursed the bold desire to gain control of a passageway between the Atlantic and the Pacific through the territory of Panama, Costa Rica or Nicaragua. The sacking of the city of Gra-



THE LAST "KING" OF TALAMANCA AT HOME.

nada, in June, 1665, by John Davis after he had sailed up the San Juan River, crossed the great lake with entire impunity and taken the place by surprise, seemed to indicate that such an enterprise would not be difficult.

Mansfield and his Vice-Admiral, the famous Henry Morgan, set sail from Jamaica with fifteen ships and 1000 men, resolved to carry out the great project which as they hoped would open to them the gateway to the Southern Sea and place within their reach the riches of Peru. They entered the Coclé River, in the Kingdom of Tierra Firme, purposing to cross the Cordillera and take the city of Natá on the Pacific side. Learning, however, that the President of the *Audiencia* of Panama was preparing to offer them serious resistance, they followed the advice given them by an old Spaniard whom they had taken prisoner and changed their plan. This prisoner told them that their scheme could be more easily effected by way of the Province of Costa Rica; that the city of Cartago was undefended and possessed of great riches; that it could be reached in two days from the Atlantic coast; that in two days more they could reach the port of Caldera on the Pacific, and that the road was so good that they could transport their impedimenta in carts. Moreover, the buccaneers knew that at the shipyard in Nicoya

there was under construction a fine ship that could be made most serviceable to their plans.¹

And so with this favorable outlook, Mansfield and Morgan set sail, leaving five large ships at the Punta del Toro,² and came to anchor in El Portete with nine smaller vessels, on the 8th of April, 1666. Having succeeded in capturing the watch that guarded the point, they were enabled by night to surprise the village of Matina and make all the inhabitants prisoners, as well as those who were on the cacao plantations on the outskirts of the place. One of the Spaniards taken at Matina, whose name was Roque Jacinto Hermoso, a man who had served in Talamanca under the command of Don Rodrigo Arias Maldonado, was induced to act as guide for the buccaneers, and, although convinced by reports received at Matina that they had been deceived as to the facilities of travel and the richness of the city, they set out on their march toward Cartago.

Accompanying Mansfield and Morgan were 636 men of the most diverse nationalities, for the command was composed of English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Flemish, Greeks, Levantines, Genoese and even Indians and negroes. Among the officers figured John Davis, Joseph

¹ *Archivos Nacionales de Costa Rica*. Sección Histórica. Guatemala, Leg. VIII, Exp. 110.

² Bocas del Toro, in the Bay of the Almirante.

Broadley and the Frenchman, Jean Le Maire. Having sent forward a number of men, guided by the traitor Roque Jacinto Hermoso, to round up all the inhabitants in order to prevent their giving warning to Cartago, they crossed the Reventazón River, the greater number by swimming, and on the *hacienda* of Alonso de Bonilla surprised a group of laborers, who, on seeing them approach, attempted flight. One was killed and others wounded, but one Indian, a Christian from the hamlet of Teotique, in Tierra Adentro, by the name of Esteban Yapirí, succeeded in making his escape by plunging resolutely into the Reventazón and swimming away under a rain of bullets. Without stopping to rest, he made his way through the forests and arrived at Teotique half dead from exhaustion. Here he informed Fray Juan de Luna, curate of that place, of what had occurred, and the latter immediately despatched a courier to Cartago with the terrible news.

At three o'clock, on the dawn of the 14th of April, Don Juan López de la Flor, Governor of Costa Rica, received Fray Juan de Luna's letter. Surely the messenger could have knocked at no better door, for Don Juan López de la Flor was a soldier in every sense of the word. He had been educated in the wars in Flanders, and, besides, the news of the buccaneers' invasion

did not take him altogether by surprise. Eight days before, he had received a letter from Don Juan Pérez de Guzmán, President of the *Audiencia* of Panama, advising him that Mansfield had sailed from Jamaica, though with the purpose of attacking the city of Granada in Nicaragua; yet the Governor had despatched orders to all the militia of the province to prepare for the defense of the country in case of necessity.

On receipt of the letter, he instantly summoned Sergeant-Major Alonso de Bonilla and ordered him to set out with four picked men to reconnoiter the road from Matina. Alonso de Bonilla, a worthy descendant of the *conquistadores*, straddled his mule, shouldered his arquebus and sallied forth. Behind him went Captain Pedro Venegas at the head of thirty-six men, with orders to construct trenches in the defiles of Quebrada Honda (Deep Ravine), a strategic point with good natural defenses through which the enemy would be forced to pass. The following day Captains Don José de Guevara and Don José de Bolívar, with infantry forces, marched out to man the trenches and Captain Don José de Alvarado, with the cavalry, took up his position at Santiago, to the west of the entrenchment. A little later, the Governor in his turn likewise took the field with the rest of the troops, numbering altogether six hundred



PALENQUE OF THE LAST "KING" OF TALAMANCA.

men—badly armed, however, because of the great scarcity of guns. But all were bent on doing their duty, for these Spanish colonists of Costa Rica had not, like so many others, lost the warrior virtues of their forebears. The ruggedness of the mountains had compelled them to preserve their bodily vigor; from continuous struggles with the Indians, they were still accustomed to fighting.³

Meanwhile the buccaneers arrived at Turrialba on the 15th of April. Entering that village they saw a saddled mule and asked an Indian woman to whom it belonged. The woman replied that it belonged to Sergeant-Major Alonso de Bonilla, who was out with a searching party of several arquebusiers, adding that the Governor was awaiting them at Quebrada Honda with a large force of soldiers. She gave them besides all the data they requested as to distances and roads. Then, having lodged themselves in the *Cabildo*, the church and the

³The Governor of Costa Rica, Don Juan Francisco Sáenz Vázquez, in a letter to the King in 1676, writes as follows: "Had not the nobility of this province been so warlike, and, following their example, had not the rest of the inhabitants been possessed of remarkable military ardor, and had not the leaders of the regiment—which is composed of twelve companies, a Master of Camp, a Sergeant-Major and two Adjutants, three Companies of Cavalry, and a Commissioner-General—been such experienced soldiers, there is no doubt but that some *contretemps* would have befallen as a result of the many attempts the enemy has made to occupy the province." León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 361.

houses of the Indians, the buccaneers killed all the cows and mules they could find for food, smashed in pieces the church images, cut down the fruit trees and committed many other depredations.

Before this, although they had had to struggle against the difficulties of a road which, as one Governor of Costa Rica expressed it, must have been made by crazy people, they had been light-hearted on the march. Laughingly they had said they were going to take chocolate at Cartago with Don Juan López de la Flor, and when, having asked Roque Jacinto Hermoso whether the courtesans and women of Costa Rica were pretty, he replied that they were, their demonstrations of joy had been most extravagant; but now when they found that their presence had been discovered and heard of the energetic action of the Governor, they realized that the undertaking to reach the Pacific was not as easy as they had thought, and Mansfield, Morgan and their captains assembled in an animated council of war to decide what was to be done.

On his part, the courageous Alonso de Bonilla lost no time. Through the density of the woods he maintained a surveillance over the movements of the enemy, and, not content with this, opened fire on the invaders. The latter, supposing they were being attacked by a considerable force in



IMAGE OF OUR LADY OF CONCEPCION.

Presented by Philip II. to the Franciscans of Costa Rica, now preserved in the Church of the village of Paraiso, near the city of Cartago. (Photo. Gómez.)

those awful defiles, were terrified and resolved to retreat, and, on the 16th of April, precipitately returned to Matina, leaving behind at Turrialba some arms and munitions of war. When the Governor heard of their retreat, he set out in pursuit with one hundred and twenty men, but, unable to overtake them, succeeded only in capturing two stragglers. Twelve other buccaneers were drowned in crossing the rivers. On the 23rd of April, Mansfield reëmbarked at El Portete. Before leaving, he did much to cajole the Tariaca Indians, making them presents of hatchets and knives, and everything that had been taken from the inhabitants of Matina, and told them that he would soon return—that, in view of that return, they must establish large maize plantations, and also strongly recommended to them an alliance with the Talamancas against the Spaniards.

In former times the Talamancas had maintained friendly relations with the buccaneers and filibusters that frequented Almirante Bay and supplied them with provisions in exchange for implements, but this friendship had been broken off on a certain occasion when a party arrived at Bocas del Toro and invited the Indians and their women to eat and drink with them, and the buccaneers, becoming intoxicated, killed some of their male guests and carried off their wives.

From that time on the Talamancas had declared themselves enemies of the pirates and the latter held them in such fear that they did not dare to go ashore in their country, even to get water. So great was this enmity that Henry Morgan talked of hunting like wild animals the terrible Indians of Bocas del Toro and exterminating them.⁴

Thus, as Mansfield really cherished the idea of returning to Costa Rica, he took away with him the traitor Roque Jacinto Hermoso and seven Indians of Tariaca for service later as guides. As for the Talamancas, not only did they not accept the buccaneers' proposal of an alliance, but in the month of May two hundred Urinamas repaired to Cartago with their bows and arrows to place themselves under the orders of the Governor against the chance of the return of Mansfield, which they all feared. Nevertheless, ten years later, on the 30th of June, 1676, 800 filibusters and buccaneers landed at El Portete, sacked the Matina Valley, and, guided by some of these very Urinamas, set out for Cartago. The Governor, Don Juan Francisco Sáenz Vázquez, went out to meet them with 500 soldiers and 200 Indian auxiliaries and gave them battle, killing 200 men and driving them back to their ships.

⁴ Oexmelin—*Histoire des Aventuriers Filibustiers*, Vol. II, pp. 203-213. Atrevoux, 1775.

At the retreat of Mansfield and Morgan the Spaniards looked with great surprise. They were unable to believe that they were moved by fear inspired by the energetic resolution of Don Juan López de la Flor and the opportune shots of Alonso de Bonilla. The pious credulity of many attributed the happy outcome to the miraculous intervention of the Virgin, whose image was then the object of veneration in the convent church of the village of Ujarraz, and which, according to tradition, had been presented to the Franciscans by King Philip II. The biographers of the pirates, buccaneers and filibusters, who with such complaisance tell of their triumphs, are wont to remain silent concerning their reverses. When reference is made to them at all, it is always of the briefest and in a tone disparaging to the Spanish. Thus it is not strange that the defeat of this invasion of Costa Rica by Mansfield and Morgan should be so little known. The simplicity and moderation with which Governors López de la Flor and Sáenz Vázquez⁵ relate the events in which they took part are in striking contrast with the boastfulness of the buccaneers and their historians when they record the Spanish defeats. Without pretending to deny the audacity and intrepidity displayed by the former on various occasions,

⁵ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 362.

the truth is that their successful exploits may be reduced for the most part to surprises by night of defenseless, or almost defenseless, cities by greatly superior force.

However, taught by these reverses, the buccaneers did not return to attempt the opening of a way to the Pacific over Costa Rican territory, but only continued to sack cacao plantations in the undefended Valley of Matina, as a result of which frequent military expeditions took place. Nor did a stable peace reign in Talamanca, in spite of the fact that it had been resolved to abandon war and trust the reduction of the Indians to the missionaries, who set about the task with most commendable enthusiasm and courage. From the beginning of the conquest the Franciscans had not relaxed their efforts to teach the Indians of Costa Rica. The kindly Padre, Estrada Rávago, the idol of the Guetares, had belonged for a time to this order. Fray Martín de Bonilla,⁶ Fray Pedro de Betanzos, Fray Lorenzo de Bienvenida and their brethren collaborated most effectively with the philanthropic Juan Vázquez de Coronado in 1563 and 1564. Ever since that time Franciscan convents had existed in Costa Rica, and the thought was entertained of founding a mission in Talamanca

⁶ Fray Martín de Bonilla was a premonstrant.

and Bocas del Toro.⁷ But, during the governorship *ad interim* of Anguciana de Gamboa and because of the controversies between the friars and this arbitrary governor, they attempted to abandon the province and go out to the Philippine Islands. Anguciana had them arrested and put in the stocks, with chains about their necks, and kept them in custody for two months—until, indeed, they renounced their projected voyage.

In the provincial chapter of the Order of San Francisco, held in Cartago in 1581, it was proposed to establish a mission in the Valley of the Duy, or Mexicans, and, seven months later, these same Franciscans, who already maintained a mission in Aoyaque, on the right bank of the Tarire River, besought the King to found a Spanish city in the Valley of the Duy. Among the brethren who labored most arduously at that period, Fray Agustín de Ceballos deserves special mention. He visited among all the tribes as far as Guaymí and sent to the King an interesting report concerning Talamanca and the lives and customs of the Indians.⁸ When the city of Santiago was founded by Don Diego de Sojo in 1605, the Franciscans set to work to convert the Indians, establishing in that city the convent of *Nuestra Señora de los Angeles*, which

⁷ Dr. Don Bernardo Augusto Thiel—*Datos Cronológicos para la Historia Eclesiástica de Costa Rica*.

⁸ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vol. V, p. 158.

became the headquarters of the missions of Talamanca. Here the Padres Juan de Ortega, Martín del Castillo, Ricardo de Jerusalén, Pedro de Figueroa, Juan Castaño, Juan de Monteroso, and others labored with great activity.

In spite of the loss of the city of Talamanca, the Franciscans continued to penetrate into the country of the rebellious Indians, who tolerated their presence on condition that they should not be accompanied by other Spaniards. The same conditions prevailed after the retirement of the courtly Don Rodrigo Arias Maldonado. In 1675, Fray Juan de Matamoros assembled in the village of Cururú, and Conamarí, one hundred and twelve Christianized Indians from the tribes of Cabécar, Nucueba, Ciruru, Chicagua, Tariquí, Taricí, Urinama and Urarubó, various of which inhabited the country between the rivers Tarire and Tilorio, also called the Estrella and Changuinola;⁹ but in 1678 the Urinamas revolted and threatened the village of San Mateo de Chirripó, the seat of the head of the Corregimiento of Tierra Adentro and of the Talamanca missions. Captain Don Antonio Pacheco marched against them at the head of fifty soldiers and brought them again under submission. In this same year the Chánguinás of the Tararia River¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid.*—Vol. V, p. 353.

¹⁰ The Mosquitos gave to the river Tilorio, or Tararia, the

crossed the Cordillera towards the Pacific and stationed themselves on the road that led to Panama—built by the *Adelantado* Don Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado in 1601—with the object of waylaying travelers, and it was necessary to send an expedition against them in order to drive them back to their own country.

From 1689, with the arrival in Costa Rica of the Recollets, Fray Melchor López and Fray Antonio Margil, the Talamanca missions entered their apogee. To the last named his brethren afterwards gave the title of Apostle of Guatemala¹¹ because of his admirable works, and in Cartago his memory is still cherished with veneration and the pious still tell of his miracles. They resolutely pushed forward into the mountains preaching to the Indians along the Tarire, Coén, Ararí, Urén and Terbi, and founded twelve hermitages at different points and baptized more than seven thousand Indians. Behind them came also Fray Sebastián de las Alas, Fray Pablo Otálora and Fray Diego Macotella. All passed through great hardships and suffered persecutions with Christian humility; but the work of teaching made great progress.

name of Changuinola, which in their language means river of the Chánguinaas.

¹¹ Fray Isidro Feliz de Espinosa—*El Peregrino Septentrional Atlántico: delineado en la exemplarissima vida del venerable Fr. Antonio Margil de Jesus*. Valencia, 1742.

The Spaniards, by advice of the missionaries, refrained from entering the Talamanca country, and the Indians had begun to accustom themselves to the blessings of peace when there suddenly burst upon them a new enemy a hundred times more cruel than the hated Spaniard. In 1641 a Portuguese ship, captained by Lorenzo Gramalxo and laden with negro slaves from the Guinea coast, was wrecked off the little island of Mosquitos in the Province of Nicaragua, and these negroes, having thus regained their liberty, established themselves on that island, whence is derived the name of *Zambos Mosquitos*¹² by which they are known, and afterwards, at various points along the Nicaraguan coast inhabited by Carib Indians. With these Indians they kept up a crude warfare and carried off their women. From this mixture resulted a perverse and ferocious race, which became a scourge to the small Spanish settlements along the Atlantic coast of the Kingdom of Guatemala. As time passed, these Mosquitos entered into friendly relations and opened up a commerce with the English buccaneers and filibusters of Jamaica, becoming their best allies. In 1698 a party of Mosquitos and English filibusters mounted the

¹² *Zambo* is the Spanish name given to one who is the son of a negro and an Indian woman or of an Indian man and a negress.

river Tarire, attacked the Christianized Indian villages of Concepción, Santísima Trinidad and San Buenaventura, founded by the missionaries, and captured many Indians, who were sold as slaves in Jamaica. Beginning with this date, the incursions of the Mosquitos and their English friends continued every year and have been one of the principal causes of the depopulation of Talamanca.

Another grave danger that menaced the missionaries was the hostility of certain irreducible tribes that made frequent attacks on the villages of the Christianized Indians. For the defense of these, Fray Francisco de San José and Fray Pablo de Rebullida, in 1699, petitioned the President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala for an escort of thirty soldiers. The soldiers were supplied them the following year. From 1695 these two missionaries had labored with great ardor in Talamanca, going about in the territories of the Urinamas, Cabécaras and Chánguinás. These last were particularly ferocious. They once wounded Fray Pablo de Rebullida with a spear and on another occasion were on the point of putting an end to his life. The missionaries, convinced that, in order to consolidate their work, it would be necessary to separate the submissive tribes from those that showed themselves to be irreducible, undertook this task and transferred

a part of the Térrebes and Téxabas to the other side of the Cordillera on the Pacific slope. This was the origin of the village of San Francisco de Térraba. A few months after this transference, in 1700, several tribes of Talamanca declared war against those Térrabas that remained in that province and against the Chánguinas. This war for a time paralyzed the work of the missionaries.

It was soon resumed, and, in the month of September, 1701, Fray Francisco de San José set out from Cartago with the escort of thirty soldiers granted him by the *Audiencia*, under the command of Captain Juan de Bonilla. Instead of entering Talamanca by land, Fray José took ship at Matina, and on the 20th of November arrived at the mouth of the Tilorio or Changuinola River. But, for lack of a pilot he was unable to pass the bar, and for this reason stopped at the island of Tójar, or Colón, where he had already preached. He disembarked at dawn of the 22nd with but two soldiers and two negro slaves belonging to Captain Bonilla. Encountering no Indians on the beach, he set up a shout, calling to his friend the principal *cacique* of Quenamaza. The Indians, however, rushed out of the woods, and, failing to recognize him in the darkness, replied to his calls with a shower of arrows and wounded him seriously with a



RUINS OF CHURCH AT UJARRAZ.

Built in the 17th century by Governor Don Miguel Gómez de Lara.

spear. They killed three of his companions; the fourth, also wounded, escaped into the forest. In his peril, the missionary cried out to them in their own tongue that he was Fray José, so that they might recognize him, and in this way he saved his life. Nevertheless, fearful of reprisals by the escort, the Indians refused to treat with the Spaniards.

Fray José then directed his course towards the mouth of the Tarire River. Here likewise he was unable to enter because of contrary currents, and was obliged to continue his voyage as far as the beach of Guaymí. From there he went on to Portobelo in a canoe manned by eight men, leaving Captain Bonilla with the rest of the escort at Guaymí. Once arrived at Portobelo, the indefatigable missionary succeeded in interesting many pious persons in his work; the same success attended him at Chagres and Panama. With the alms collected he purchased a sloop, and the President of the *Audiencia* from his private purse supplied another. In April, 1702, he returned to Guaymí, where Bonilla awaited him, and together they proceeded to the Tarire River. This time also they were unable to enter, and the same thing happened at Querei¹⁸ (Limón). From this place Fray José despatched one of the sloops to Portobelo in quest

¹⁸ Querey and Carlay are the same.

of provisions and he himself set out, with the escort, for Matina, whence Bonilla, incapacitated by sickness, was forced to return to Carfago. The sloop which had been sent to Portobelo returned to Matina with the provisions, but because of the prevalence of unfavorable weather it was impossible to unload and the vessel had to put back to Portobelo. Later it came again to Matina and this time it was able to undertake the discharge of its cargo. While the crew were thus engaged, four pirogues bearing French buccaneers suddenly made their appearance and carried off the sloop with the ten sailors by which she was manned.

A setback of this nature was not enough to dampen the evangelical ardor of Fray José. At Matina he built a canoe and in September he went in this small craft, for the second time, to Portobelo, where he labored so industriously that by the 30th of that same month he had ready a small frigate and twenty soldiers for the return to Talamanca. But the President of the *Audiencia* of Panama ordered his detention, doubtless on the ground that he was preparing to enter a territory outside the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Tierra Firme with an armed expedition. Thus it happened that Fray José was unable to leave Portobelo until the 4th of June, 1703, when he set sail in a sloop.

Fray Pablo de Rebullida on his part was wasting no time during these events. After transferring the T  xabas who had remained in Talamanca to the new village of T  rraba on the Pacific side, he again made his entry into the country of the Terbis, purposing to carry them off also. In this he did not succeed, for the Indians were greatly incensed over the coming of Fray Jos   into Talamanca with an armed guard. Meanwhile war broke out afresh between the tribes hostile to the missionaries and those that were their friends. Fray Jos   arrived at the mouth of the Tarire from Portobelo in the sloop and again without success attempted to make his way into the river. He then proceeded to Querei, where on the beach he came upon some Indians, who took flight when they saw that he came with a following. From Querei he continued by land, though beset with great difficulties, to Suretka, the point where the city of Santiago de Talamanca had flourished until its destruction in 1610. On the march nearly all those who were of his company abandoned him, whereupon he determined to make his way to Matina. Here he arrived on the 4th of August, 1708. From this place he passed on to Cartago, and thence to Guatemala, in response to a summons from his superior.

This departure did not, however, result in the

abandonment of the Talamanca missions. On the contrary, in that same year of 1708, Fray Pablo de Rebullida, who had remained with them, received help in the persons of the Padres Bernabé de San Francisco, Miguel Hernández and Francisco Guerrero, and in the following year Fray Antonio de Andrade and Fray Lucas de Rivera joined them. But the task of the missionaries became more and more difficult by reason of the incessant warfare among the Indians and the frequent invasions of the Mosquitos and the English from Jamaica, who had found in Talamanca a rich field for the slave trade that supplied the plantations of the island. In 1705, for the second time, the famous Fray Antonio Margil arrived in Costa Rica; with him came Fray Lucas Morillo. They set out together for Talamanca, leaving Cartago in the month of June of that year with an escort of sixty soldiers under the command of Captain Francisco de Noguera y Moncada, on whom the *Audiencia* of Guatemala bestowed the rank of Lieutenant-Governor of Talamanca. Near the village of Tuís, however, Fray Antonio Margil received a letter ordering him to proceed to Mexico. He was, therefore, obliged to retrace his steps—a turn of fate that proved a great misfortune for the missions.

From the year 1705 on, the missionaries made



*V.R. del V.P.F. Antonio Margil, de Jesus, Predicador Apostolico, Franciscano
aclamado por Apostol de Guatemala, en las Indias.*

their way about Talamanca only in the company of soldiers from the garrison that had been established in the village of Cabécar. Because of the prudence and tact of Captain Noguera, the Indians gave evidence of no change in their bearing as a result of the presence among them of the soldiers, and the missionaries were thus enabled to pursue their ministry with greater security and excellent results, in spite of the interminable war between the Terbis and the Chánguinás and the invasions of the Mosquitos and the English. To prevent a continuance of the latter's practice of stealing the Indians, the missionaries proposed to the *Audiencia* to depopulate the territory of Talamanca and transfer its inhabitants to the interior of the Province; but on this point no definite decision was reached. Constantly struggling against these difficulties, the missionaries continued their labors for several years under the protection of the authorities of the Province of Costa Rica and the Kingdom of Guatemala, who revealed the greatest interest in their work. This interest was shared also by the Crown, as shown by the royal decree of July 20th, 1709, in which the King declared that the encouragement and protection of the missions held first place in his heart, superior even to the temporal interest of his dominions in the Indies.

CHAPTER XIX

GENERAL UPRISING THROUGHOUT TALAMANCA—PERSEVERANCE OF THE MISSIONARIES—THE TALAMANCAS TAKE THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE CHRISTIANIZED INDIANS—PROCRASTINATION OF THE SPANISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION—RESULTS OF THE MISSIONARIES' WORK

1709-1821

DURING the very year in which the King of Spain announced the supreme interest inspired in him by the missions came the sudden ruin of the work they had brought to fruition in Costa Rica, and, more lamentable still, it was through a most trivial occurrence that this was brought about. One day Pablo Presbere, *Cacique* of Suinsí, the most dreaded warrior in Talamanca, saw one of the friars and some of the soldiers of the escort writing letters to their relatives and friends in Cartago. In the mind of the bellicose *cacique* the suspicion arose that these letters had for their object the summoning of the Spaniards. This was all that was needed to start the war cry.

In response to his call all of the tribes, from Chirripó to the island of Tójar in Almirante Bay, with the exception of the Bribrís, flew to

arms. At the head of a band of Cabécaras and Terbis, Presbere marched on Urinama, where, on the 28th of September, 1709, he attacked the convent and killed Fray Pablo de Rebullida—the good priest who had spent fifteen years of his life in Talamanca and spoke seven of the Indian tongues—and the two soldiers who were with him. Presbere then proceeded to Chirripó, where Fray Antonio de Zamora, two soldiers, and the wife and son of one of them were killed.

At the same time Fray Antonio de Andrade happened to be in Cabécar with Francisco de Segura, leader of the escort, and twenty-three soldiers. The first news they received of the uprising of the Indians was conveyed by an onslaught of the infuriated horde, which fell upon them without warning and killed five soldiers of their company. The remaining eighteen with their leader and Fray Antonio de Andrade made what defense they could and only with great difficulty managed to effect a retreat, wounded and hotly pursued by the Indians, to Tuís, a village situated twelve leagues from Cartago. The insurrectionists burned fourteen of the churches established by the missionaries in Talamanca, the convents and the municipal buildings, and destroyed the sacred images and objects of religious worship. Only the two churches at Viceita, in the territory of the Bribrís,

were saved. The American geologist, Dr. William M. Gabb, of whom we have already made mention, discovered in 1875, in a stream near San José de Cabécar, a piece of the incensory of the church in that place and later presented it to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. From the wreck of the great work of the missionaries, this is the sole relic preserved.

This terrible disaster caused widespread grief throughout the Province of Costa Rica. With one voice the citizens demanded that exemplary punishment be administered. But as there was a lack of military essentials for such an undertaking, the Governor, Don Lorenzo de Granda y Balbín, sought assistance from the *Audiencia* at Guatemala. To help the Governor in his need, the *Audiencia* forwarded to Cartago seventy-five firearms, one hundred steel arms, eight hundred pounds of powder, four thousand bullets and four thousand *pesos*. With this material aid, the Governor organized a force of two hundred men and resolved to attack Talamanca on two sides. In the beginning of February, 1710, he sallied forth from Cartago with Fray Antonio de Andrade and one hundred and twenty soldiers, directing his course towards Boruca, on the Pacific side, where, on his arrival, he established his headquarters. The other force, composed of eighty men under the command of



TALAMANCA CHIEFS.

The chief in the center is the son of Dr. William M. Gabb, the American geologist, and an Indian woman.

the Master of Camp, Don José de Casasola y Córdoba, marched directly upon Talamanca over the Chirripó road.

From Boruca the Governor caused the Indians of the district to open a path through to Viceita, and, passing over the Cordillera, finally reached that place, where the Indians had remained faithful to the Spanish. From Viceita he went on to Cabécar, where he was joined by Casasola y Córdoba. With the juncture of the two forces, general headquarters were established at Cabécar. Numerous sorties were made into the rebel country and seven hundred Indians were captured. Several chiefs of the insurrection also fell into their hands as prisoners, among them the *cacique* Presbere, who was surrendered by the Viceitas. The *cacique* Comezalá and several others managed to make their escape. The Spaniards returned with their prisoners, but of these only five hundred arrived at Cartago, for on the road two hundred died or regained their liberty. The captive Indians were parceled out by the Governor among the officers and soldiers who had taken part in the campaign and their leaders were brought to trial for insurrection. The *cacique* Presbere gave evidence of great strength of character, refusing to denounce any of his accomplices when they all cast the blame on his shoulders. The Gov-

error condemned him to capital punishment and he was shot on the 4th of July, 1710. Of this great uprising the Talamanca Indians still cherish the memory.

Yet the missionaries were not disheartened by the ruin of their twenty years' work, which had been destroyed in a day; they set actively to work to secure the necessary means of reconstructing it. The Bishop of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, was, however, not favorable to their undertaking. He attributed the disaster to the ignorance of the Recollets and the excessive rigor of the Observantines¹ who had had charge of the missions of Talamanca, and preferred that in the future they should be confided to the care of the Jesuits. The Bishop was not without reason in the position he took, although there must be taken into account the enormous difficulties that had beset the missionaries because of the ruggedness of the country in which they labored and the wide dispersion of the Indians, who could not be assembled in communities of any considerable size—an indispensable requisite for the work of bringing them under civilization.

When the King was informed of the events in Talamanca, he sent his thanks by royal decree of September 1, 1713, to all those who had par-

¹ Another branch of the Franciscan Order.

ticipated in the chastisement of the rebels. As to the reestablishment of the missions with the accompaniment of armed escorts, he ordered that a meeting be held to be composed of the chief authorities of the Kingdom of Guatemala and of well-informed persons in Talamanca, to determine upon the most appropriate course. This meeting, which was held in the city of Guatemala, did not report until the 9th of September, 1716. At its session the Recollet friars favored the establishment of Spanish towns in the vicinity of the Indian strongholds; but the majority voted in favor of annual excursions, under escort of fifty men, and the foundation in the Boruca country, by fifty Spanish families from Cartago, of a city to serve as the center of operations. The missionaries protested against this resolution, which in their minds was a serious mistake. Nothing, however, resulted from the deliberation because of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes that occurred in Guatemala in 1717, for these events absorbed the entire attention of the authorities.

At the first opportunity, the missionaries returned to the charge, principally Fray Antonio de Andrade, who had removed to the city of Guatemala in 1718. By this time the matter of the missions had fallen into a state of innocuous desuetude because of

the confusion and procrastination of the Spanish colonial administration, and it was not until 1726 that the *Audiencia* decreed the reestablishment of armed missions in Talamanca. The plan ultimately adopted included the foundation of a city, made up of a hundred Spanish families, with a garrison of a hundred soldiers, and provided for an outlay of twelve thousand *pesos* during the first year and eight thousand *pesos* for each succeeding year, to cover the necessities of the colony. It was furthermore resolved to petition the King to send out to Talamanca two hundred families from the Canary Islands. All of the foregoing was submitted to the better judgment of the Crown.

While the leading authorities of Guatemala were proceeding so leisurely in the matter, the Recollet friars were not idle. They occupied themselves in breaking in new missionaries for Talamanca and at the same time made representations direct to the Court at Madrid, to which they sent their agents. It was not until 1788 that they were able to secure (and this through the medium of a favorable report by the Council of the Indies) a royal decree from the King, bearing date the 21st of May, approving the Guatemala meeting resolution of 1726. In spite of the King's order, the reestablishment of Talamanca remained in abeyance,



BELL FROM THE ANCIENT CHURCH AT SAN FRANCISCO DE TÉRRABA.
Now in the National Museum of Costa Rica. (Photo, Gómez.)

stifled by the mass of reports interchanged and contrary opinions.

Neither on their part did the Costa Rican authorities lack interest in Talamanca. Never did they waver in their support of the missionaries' petitions. Particularly was this true of the Governor, Don Diego de la Haya Fernández, who in 1719 wrote to the King that the reduction of this territory could not be accomplished by the preaching of the evangelists alone, and that if his Majesty would give him two companies of infantry and six thousand *pesos* annually, he would guarantee to bring to an end the reconquest of Talamanca. This same Governor, acting under authority of August 23, 1721, wrote to the English Governor of Jamaica, in 1722, demanding the return of two thousand Indians who had been captured in that territory and the Island of Tójar by the Mosquitos and their allies and sold as slaves. Notwithstanding peace then reigned between the Crowns of Spain and England, the stolen Indians were not returned, and the negotiations carried on in this regard at London by Don Jacinto Pozobueno, Ambassador of Spain, had no better result.

Wearied by so many delays, the missionaries decided to depend on their own resources alone, as they had in 1689, and resume their task. This

induced the Guatemala authorities to provide them with an escort of twenty-five men. In March, 1741, Fray José Vela arrived in Cartago with the aged Fray Antonio de Andrade, the sole survivor of the brethren who had been in Talamanca at the time of the great uprising. In February, 1742, they founded in Tuís the village of Jesús of the Monte with Indians who voluntarily came out from Talamanca, and in September Fray Juan Mendiúur and Fray José Otaolaurruchi having also arrived again, with their coöperation penetrated into the mountain region accompanied by twenty-five soldiers and forty Indians from the Estrella River, only to be driven out by the natives. In the following year Fray José Vela, with better fortune, succeeded in reaching Viceita, and from there pushed on to the Urén River. The *cacique* of that place received him badly; the Indians were unwilling even to give them food. When Fray José attempted to baptize them, they refused the office, saying that Sibú² forbade it; yet by virtue of much patience and by means of gifts, he succeeded at last in securing permission to baptize two hundred and thirty-two children, though still he could convince none of the adults. He then tried to reach Cabécar; but this was impossible,

² Sibú is the name by which the Talamanca Indians designate the Supreme Being.

for on the road his guides deserted him. Later he got as far as the Changuinola River.

With the arrival in 1743 of the Padres Murga, Nieto and Núñez, the missions entered upon a period of greater activity. At that period, Talamanca had been considerably depopulated by epidemics, internecine wars, struggles with the Spaniards and invasions of the Mosquitos and English, who had already completely annihilated the Chánguinás of the Tararia River and the Terbis of Tójar Island. On that island, it appears, a number of English had established themselves. As a consequence, the President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala called upon the Governor of Costa Rica for a report, as a preliminary to their expulsion. The dangers that beset the coasts of the Kingdom of Guatemala, constantly menaced as they were by the covetousness of the English, who were the friends and protectors of the savage Mosquitos, forced the government to take exceptional measures for their defense. In 1745, though as an exclusively military measure, Brigadier Don Alonso Fernández de Heredia was appointed Governor of Nicaragua and Comandante General of Costa Rica from Cape Gracias á Dios to the Chagres River, and protected the Talamanca missions as a means of removing the Indians from the reach of Mosquitos and English aggressions.

The missionaries had been persuaded that, in order to accomplish this object and at the same time bring about the conversion of the Indians to Christianity, the sole recourse was to transfer them to localities far removed from the Atlantic coasts. To this end, they had founded the village of San Francisco de Térraba in 1689, and in 1744 established the village of Cabagra, four leagues distant from the first named. These villages they peopled with the Terbis Indians of Talamanca, but, as those who consented to follow them voluntarily were few in number, it was determined to resort to coercive measures. Such was the motive for the excursion made into that territory in April, 1747, by the Master of Camp, Don Francisco Fernández de la Pastora, at the head of the missionaries and a force of forty-five soldiers. They proceeded as far as Cabécar and returned with one hundred and twenty-three Indian prisoners.

Brigadier Fernández de Heredia lent his aid to this expedition as well as that which set out in 1748, with fifty men under the command of the same Master of Camp, and marched into Talamanca over the Chirripó road, while another command numbering fifty men, under the leadership of Pedro Rodríguez, went to Boruca. At the village of Térraba the latter joined the missionaries Murga



SILVER TABERNACLE OF ANCIENT CHURCH OF SAN FRANCISCO
DE TERRABA.

Now preserved in the Episcopal Museum of San José de Costa Rica.
(Photo, Gómez.)

and Mendíjur, and, accompanied by Christianized Indians of that place, Boruca and Cabagra, crossed the Cordillera as Governor Granda y Balbín had done in 1710. They arrived in the country of the Terbis and were met by the refusal of those Indians to unite with the expedition for fear of their enemies, the Viceitas, over whose lands they would have to pass in order to reach Cabécar. The Padre Mendíjur, therefore, returned to San Francisco de Térraba with the Indian auxiliaries and a few Terbis prisoners, while Rodríguez continued his march, passing through Viceita and Coén to Cabécar, where he came up with Fernández de la Pastora. The latter, informed of what had taken place in connection with the Terbis and Viceitas, despatched a courier to overtake the Padre Mendíjur with a proposal to make an entry into Viceita. The Padre sent back his acquiescence and asked for thirty men to go with them from Térraba to Viceita. Fernández de la Pastora sent him fifty soldiers with sixty Indian prisoners. Of the soldiers, twenty turned back towards Cabécar at the end of two days' march and fell into an ambush prepared by the Indians, whose arrows killed two of the Spaniards. The thirty other men were also ambushed in the heights of the Cordillera and lost one man, but succeeded in reaching Térraba on the 12th of June.

On the same day they set out with the Padre Mendíjur on their return over the Cabagra road and came to the headwaters of the Terbi River. The Indians of that place begged the Padre, before leaving for Viceita, to help them against the Chánguinas, who had been making war on them; and the Padre, to oblige them, proceeded as far as the Changuinola River, but there he found the Indian huts deserted, for the Indians had taken flight on the approach of the Spaniards. As the Terbis of the North had attacked the Viceitas while the Padre Mendíjur was in Changuinola, the latter, fearful of another attack if they joined the Spaniards, refused to go to Cabécar with the Padre.

Since, as a result of this journey to Changuinola, the Padre Mendíjur failed to make his appearance in Viceita on the date agreed upon, Fernández de la Pastora, ignorant of what had taken place, set out in search of him on the 12th of July. He took with him twenty men, leaving fifty behind at Cabécar under the command of Manuel Serrano, to whom he gave orders to await him there until the 20th of August. If by that date he should not return, Serrano was to go on to Cartago. Fernández de la Pastora marched to San Francisco de Térraba, where the Padre Murga had remained, and from that point he sent a messenger to the Padre Mendíjur ask-

ing him to come back. As soon as the latter arrived, accompanied by ten of the leading Indians of Terbi, a council of war was held which was participated in by the Master of Camp, the missionaries and the ten Indians, and it was agreed that they should for the future discontinue the use of the village of Cabécar as a center of operations—this because, in order to reduce the Viceitas, Cabécaras and Chánguinás tribes to submission, it would be more expedient to take up their position in Terbi, as much because the Indians of that place were friends of the Spaniards as because it was easier to send provisions there from Térraba and Boruca. This plan adopted, it was resolved to put it in practice on the occasion of a third expedition. From Térraba Fernández de la Pastora returned to Cartago with 314 Talamanca Indians, of whom 144 went as prisoners and the rest as volunteers. With these Indians three villages were formed in the interior of the province, one of which was Tres Ríos, situated near San José, to-day the capital of Costa Rica.

This third incursion projected by Fernández de la Pastora was ineffective. The missionaries, however, continued their task of removing the Indians from Talamanca, notwithstanding, and in 1756 repopulated the ancient village of Orosí, near Cartago, with Indians who had voluntarily

come out of the mountains. But, although from 1758 to 1760 the Padres Zamacois, Rubio, López, Cabrera, Echeverría and Estrada labored with great diligence, their work bore little fruit. In all the many journeys they made to Viceita, Cabécar and other places, they hardly ever succeeded in bringing new parishioners. In this matter of going with the missionaries, the Indians ever displayed more stubbornness. The time came when they not only flatly refused but attempted to retrieve from the missionaries those who had allowed themselves to be persuaded. In March, 1761, the Terbis of the North took the field, and, having crossed the Cordillera, directed their march toward the settlements the missionaries had founded on the Pacific side. On the eve of Palm Sunday three hundred warriors arrived before Cabagra in a body and sacked the church, convent and all the dwelling houses. The next day, burning houses as they passed, killing the men and seizing the women, they marched upon San Francisco de Térraba, arriving at the moment when the greater part of the inhabitants were assembled in the church to hear mass, and attacked the village on three sides. The Padres Márquez and Tomás López, who were in the church with their flock, caused the doors to be locked and succeeded in making their way into the convent, which had already been



TALAMANCA BEAUTIES.

fired. Once inside, they made with their guns so effective a stand against the attacking party that they forced the Indians to retire to a safe distance, then went out into the patio of the convent, which was strewn with the arrows and spears the Terbis had launched, and, collecting these weapons, distributed them among the Christian Indians who had remained in the church, resolutely placed themselves at their head, sallied forth to attack the invaders, and put them to flight, killing a number of men and two of their principal leaders.

The town of Cabagra, inhabited by some two hundred and fifty souls, was entirely destroyed and the Indians residing there fled to Talamanca with the Terbis. Térraba, with three hundred inhabitants, alone survived. Because of this attack, the missionaries, to avoid further hostilities, asked leave to remove the village to a more secure site, and, to this end, requested an escort of soldiers to enable them to bring back the fugitives from Cabagra and continue their efforts to bring in from the mountains as many more Indians as they could. In 1764, acting upon this petition, the King ordered the President of the *Audiencia* to report fully concerning the Talamanca missions. After a lapse of two years, the President, Don Pedro de Salazar, replied that he was giving particular attention

to the missions, yet in spite of this, it was not until 1767 that it was resolved, at a meeting of the authorities, held in Guatemala, to grant the escort asked for by these missionaries of Costa Rica. Furthermore, the Archbishop, Don Francisco José de Figueredo, opposed the concession on the ground, as he said, that "the project of entering the mission country with troops, however favorably it may be colored, would never bring an infidel into the church." Salazar too was not in accord with the scheme of armed missions, and, as recorded by the historian García Peláez, retarded the matter for the reason that "since some time the missions had sunk into discredit on account of their failure and the missionaries had become an annoyance."³

Perplexed in the face of this diversity of opposition, and desirous of proceeding with certainty, the King, on the 8th of July, 1770, demanded reports on the subject from the *Audiencia*, the Ecclesiastical *Cabildo* and the *Ayuntamiento* (municipality) of the city of Guatemala. The *Audiencia* leaned toward the wishes of the missionaries, saying that experience had shown that the latter uselessly sacrificed themselves when they were not supported by an

³ Francisco de Paula García Peláez, Archbishop of Guatemala—*Memorias para la Historia del Antiguo Reino de Guatemala*, Vol. III, p. 57. Guatemala, 1852.

armed guard, and, answering the argument of the Archbishop, added that "although he might believe that the evangels could be disseminated without armed force, he was also aware that such natural measures were not opposed to their exalted ideals, the church having frequently resorted to Christian princes to force infidels to hear its teachings."

The Ecclesiastical *Cabildo* showed itself to be in sympathy with the Archbishop's opinion. As to the *Ayuntamiento* of the city of Guatemala, it resolved that before giving expression to its views, it would obtain evidence on the subject, and, to this end, asked for reports from the Governors of Costa Rica and Veragua, the missions of this last named province having been confided also to the missionaries of Guatemala ever since 1765. The Governor of Costa Rica, Don Juan Fernández de Bobadilla, replied that, in order to reduce the Talamanca Indians, it would be necessary to send out with the missionaries each year in the dry season an escort of one hundred and fifty soldiers by way of Térraba. The Governor of Veragua, Don Félix Francisco Bejarano, stated that he believed one hundred men, armed with guns, bayonets and sabers, accompanied by one hundred Indian auxiliaries with spears and machets, were sufficient for the purpose.

To enable one to form an idea of the difficulties with which the missionaries had to contend in their dealings with the administrative authorities, it is enough to say that these negotiations which were initiated by them immediately after the destruction of the village of Cabagra—that is, in 1761—were not concluded until the 19th of November, 1787, twenty-six years thereafter. On that date the King signed a royal decree wherein he said that he had resolved that the extension of the conquest of Talamanca should be proceeded with seriously, and that, for that purpose, such numbers of soldiers should be recruited at opportune times each year as might be considered necessary as escorts for the missionaries, who, he said, must enter the forests, gather together the Indians and establish them in settlements appropriately located.

While reports and papers came and went between Madrid and Guatemala, the missionaries were not idle. They diligently pursued their task of enticing the Indians from the mountains of Talamanca; though it is undoubtedly true that the missions, left to their own resources, made small progress. However, the Padre Jáuregui had considerably augmented the population of Terraba by the year 1774. The Indians began also to come in voluntarily, fleeing from the terrible persecutions of the ferocious Mosquitos



MODERN MISSIONARIES AT WORK.

and their friends the English. In 1780 forty Talamancas presented themselves to the Commandant of the garrison at Matina, who forwarded them to Cartago, where they were gathered into the fold by the missionaries. During this same year a number of Viceitas also were brought in from the mountains. During the year 1774, the missionaries labored with much success and were enabled with two hundred Talamanca Indians to found the village of Guadalupe three leagues from San Francisco de Térraba towards the Chiriquí frontier.

Yet, notwithstanding the favorable determination of the King, nothing was carried into effect with respect to Talamanca, and, even though the missionaries had to wait twenty-six years for the royal decree of November 19, 1787, they are still waiting for the escort granted them therein! In 1794 Don José Domás y Valle, President of the *Audiencia* of Guatemala, ordered the Governor of Costa Rica, Don José Vázquez y Téllez, to give them soldiers to enable them to make incursions such as were made by Fernández de la Pastora. This order the Governor undertook to obey but found compliance impossible because of the war then waging between Spain and the Republic of France. So, as before, the missionaries were compelled to go on with their work alone, or accompanied only by Indians

who had professed Christianity. In April, 1804, Fray Ramón Rojas entered the country of the Terbis of the North and brought out a few other Indians. In the following year the inhabitants of the village of Guadalupe, which was very unhealthful—so much so, indeed, that at the end of nineteen years six missionaries and more than a hundred Indians had died there—were removed to San Francisco de Térriba. From the year 1802 the Governor, Don Tomás de Acosta, had urged this transfer upon the *Audiencia* of Guatemala. Nevertheless the Indians of Guadalupe had prospered much; they possessed fields of cotton, cochineal dying works and herds of cattle.

Indeed, until the ultimate day of Spanish domination, and even for a number of years after independence was proclaimed, the Guatemala missionaries labored indefatigably for the uplift and Christianizing of the Talamancas, and, as tenaciously, the latter persisted in their rebelliousness. In 1815, Fray Apolinar Moreno and a Christianized Indian who accompanied him were waylaid and beaten by them. In June, 1816, some Indians coming to Matina from Chirripó informed the Commandant of the garrison that the Talamancas had sent word to Fray Vicente Quesada demanding the return of the Indians who had been enticed away from their country

and warning him that if he ever came among them again they would kill him as well as any Christianized Indians who might accompany him.

Yet, however incommensurate the results obtained were with their efforts, the work of the missionaries was by no means fruitless; a large number of descendants of the Indians brought in from the mountains of Talamanca to-day enjoy the benefits of civilization. The many accounts written ⁴ of this region and its inhabitants constitute a veritable treasure house for history.

The rugged surface of Talamanca, during past centuries the theater of so many fierce struggles, is already beginning to be covered by plantations; the railroad now crosses the Sixaola River not far from the site of the legendary city of Santiago, and the descendants of the dreaded warriors of former times have become inoffensive Costa Rican citizens. But in spite of every effort they are still rebellious in spirit, as are all indomitable races that refuse to accept civilization.

⁴ León Fernández—*Documentos*, Vols. V and IX; Manuel M. de Peralta—*Costa Rica y Colombia* and *Límites de Costa Rica y Colombia*.

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